

Gal 10 0 h

SERMONS

TO

YOUNG MEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By WILLIAM DODD, LL. D.

Prebendary of Brecon, and Chaplain in Ordinary
to His MAJESTY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Quod munus reipublicæ afferre majus meliusve possumus, quam si docemus, atque erudimus juventutem? his præsertim moribus, atque temporibus, quibus ita prolapsa est, ut omnium opibus refrenanda ac coercenda est. Nec vero id effici posse confido, quod ne postulandum quidem est, ut omnes adolescentes se ad hæc studia convertant. Pauci utinam!—quorum tamen in reipublicâ late patere poterit industria.

CICERO DE DIVINAT.

LONDON:

Printed for J. KNOX, and T. CADELL, in
the Strand. MDCC LXXII.

20

3 E M N 2

Y O U X O M E N



Faint, illegible text visible through the paper, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.

Faint, illegible text visible through the paper, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.

TO
PHILIP STANHOPE,
AND
CHARLES ERNST, Esqrs.

AT length, my dear young Friends,
my promise is fulfilled, and I pay
my respects to you in Dedication; not
with any purpose to flatter or to court
you: you know me too well to suspect
the former, and I am too thoroughly
satisfied of your esteem and affection,
to need the latter. But from the time

A 2

that I determined to publish these Sermons, you, who were so frequently in my view and in my heart, when I composed them; you, who were the pleasing witnesses to my writing and preaching the greater part of them; you were chosen, you may remember, the patrons and protectors of them: or rather, they were destined to become your constant and silent Monitors, when no longer in a situation to hear the friendly counsels and remonstrances of him, who loves You. —As such I deliver them into your hands, with my most hearty prayers, that they may prove effectual to remind you of the first and greatest of all duties; to stimulate you to every worthy and laudable action; and to be a kind of pledge from me to society, of that future usefulness and honour, which I have so often augured from your early virtues and improvements.

DEDICATION.

And allow me, my dear young Friends, to say, that those virtues and improvements are no more than the reasonable expectation, the just demand, of that care and culture, which you have so fortunately enjoyed. Happy, peculiarly happy, as in a variety of other instances, so in Lord CHESTERFIELD'S especial attention; which, though immediately directed to the good of one, hath proved of mutual benefit to both.

Anxious to form the Heir of his house and hopes, to every virtue, you know, my dear Mr. STANHOPE, that great and good man, with more than parental tenderness, hath supplied you with every means of literary and moral improvement. While from his own incomparable pen you have received

inestimable instructions in that art, which no man better understands, or is more capable to teach,—“The art of pleasing.” An art, next to the higher and essential duties, of prime consequence in life; and that, in which I hope you will excell no less than your illustrious predecessor. His written lessons are before you: You will preserve them as lasting monuments of his regard: but I trust, they will be preserved still more faithfully on the tables of your heart, and be thence transcribed into a life and manners, ornamental to that distinguished title which you are one day to bear.

However, neither this, or any other “Art” will avail to give true dignity to the character, or solid peace to the mind, without an attention to the laws

DEDICATION. vii

OF RELIGION. It has been my care to press this interesting topic in the volumes now before you. I cannot deny, that the thought of this publication was suggested by the “Sermons to Young Women;” whose ingenious Author certainly deserves great praise from the public, for his well-judged and well executed design. I have not attempted to imitate his manner, for you know my opinion on the subject of Imitation. Every man certainly should be left to his own mode. That of the Author of the Sermons to Young Women, is peculiarly his own; and they would hazard much, in my mind, who should attempt to copy it. Besides, there is a wide difference between Sermons composed for the press, and for the pulpit. Mine were written principally for the latter; many of them long before the

publication of the Sermons to Young Women; for I always thought a peculiar attention due to the younger part of my congregation. But on reading those Sermons, it occurred to me, that a set of plain practical Discourses to Young Men, might be useful and acceptable. I collected therefore, and revised what I had before written; and supplying what was necessary to complete my plan, here, my young Friends, I commit them to the world, under your protection and patronage. Conscious of the rectitude of my purpose, and of my sincere wishes to promote the cause of virtue and piety, I feel no solicitude respecting their reception; but, with our favourite ROMAN, in the title page, shall always think I act a proper part, by applying my little abilities to the instruction and improvement of our

DEDICATION.

ix

youth, in duties of the greatest moment, to themselves and others.

Every virtuous youth formed for the public is a blessing to it; the more valuable, as the sphere of his action is more elevated and extensive. Let me flatter myself then, my dear young Friends, that, whatever may be the fruits of my written labours, society will have cause to applaud those labours with respect to You; that, fraught with every noble sentiment, you will, the one in an exalted, the other, in an inferior, but it may be, not less useful station, endeavour to excel and shine forth, as friends to mankind! Friends to each other, I persuade myself, you will continue through life: and how pleasing and advantageous such a Friendship is, you have

in part experienced: My sermon on the subject, I hope, will be but a comment on your future lives.

Should Heaven extend my little span to see those lives happy and honourable, excelling in virtue, abounding in reputation; to see you great in the public, and blest in the private station; to see you what all your friends so ardently wish, and what all their care so justly claims: I could then, with as much sincerity and satisfaction as the famous believer of old, beg for a dissolution from this world, and close my eyes in peace and thankfulness. Nor shall I, nor shall those who love you, be disappointed of this hope; for you have ingenuous hearts, and will never throw away or abuse the singular and distinguished ad-

DEDICATION. xi

vantages, which Providence so amply provides for you.

I am,

My dear young friends and pupils,
with unalterable regard and affection,

Your ever faithful,

and most sincere friend,

WILLIAM DODD.

Pall-Mall,
March 22d, 1771.

DECLARATION

Whereas the United States of America, by their

representatives in Congress, have passed an Act

entitled "An Act to amend the several Acts

relative to the said Declaration of Independence,

and to amend the several Acts relative to the

said Declaration of Independence, and to amend

the several Acts relative to the said Declaration

of Independence, and to amend the several Acts

relative to the said Declaration of Independence,

and to amend the several Acts relative to the

said Declaration of Independence, and to amend

the several Acts relative to the said Declaration

of Independence, and to amend the several Acts

relative to the said Declaration of Independence,

and to amend the several Acts relative to the

said Declaration of Independence, and to amend

the several Acts relative to the said Declaration

of Independence, and to amend the several Acts

relative to the said Declaration of Independence,

and to amend the several Acts relative to the

said Declaration of Independence, and to amend

the several Acts relative to the said Declaration

of Independence, and to amend the several Acts

relative to the said Declaration of Independence,

and to amend the several Acts relative to the

said Declaration of Independence, and to amend

S E R M O N S
T O
Y O U N G M E N.

By WILLIAM DODD, LL.D.
Prebendary of Brecon, and Chaplain in Ordinary
to His M A J E S T Y.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. KNOX, and T. CADELL, in
the Strand. MDCC LXXII.

*Wherewithal shall a YOUNG MAN cleanse
his way?—By taking heed thereto, according to
thy WORD.*

Pfal. cxix. 9.

J. JOY & S. HETMOJ

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

SERMON I.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE on the Advantages of EARLY PIETY.	page 1
Rules of Advice to Parents.	24

SERMON II.

The fatal Consequences of YOUTHFUL DEVIATIONS and EXCESS.	29
ANECDOTES respecting the Subject.	50

SERMON III.

On FILIAL LOVE.	64
ANECDOTES.	81

CONTENTS of VOL. I.

S E R M O N IV.

On FRATERNAL LOVE.	-	-	93
ANECDOTES.	-	-	110

S E R M O N V.

On Application to WISDOM and			
LEARNING.	-	-	123
ANECDOTES.	-	-	154

S E R M O N VI.

Advice to APPRENTICES.	-	-	168
ANECDOTES.	-	-	193

S E R M O N VII.

On BAD COMPANY.	-	-	209
ANECDOTES.	-	-	227

S E R M O N VIII.

On BAD BOOKS.	-	-	243
ANECDOTES.	-	-	265

S E R M O N I.

Introductory Discourse,

On the Advantages of Early Piety.

PROVERBS viii. 17.

*I love them that love me : and those who seek me
early, shall find me.*

THAT the religion of Christ is, beyond all others, calculated to produce private and public felicity, no man, acquainted with that religion, can doubt: and that, consequently, it is the interest, as well as the duty of every individual, to recommend the practice of this divine religion. Possibly it was never more necessary to do so, than at present; when, from causes too many, and perhaps too invidious to enumerate, Christian Piety grows out of fashion, while infidelity, enthusiasm, and immorality, triumphantly raise themselves upon its well-nigh subverted foundations. These are in the same degree destructive to a state, as true and rational re-

ligion is advantageous to it; and therefore are to be discountenanced in the same proportion as the latter is to be cherished, encouraged, and honoured.

One of the best and most infallible methods to obtain this great end, is a solicitous attention to the right and early instruction of young minds; from the neglect of which almost all public and private evil proceeds. Though it is pleasing to reflect, that we have some illustrious examples of the high advantages arising from early good impressions; yet is it a truth too notorious to be denied, and too important to be despised, that an almost general neglect of early religious cultivation prevails: And if the fountain be polluted, how shall pure streams flow from it?

In this view of things we may, with concern, observe the business of that writer but too much done for him, who, with the most subtle hostility against the religion of Christ, and, we may add with confidence, against the felicity of states, exhorts to a total neglect of religious impressions; and, paradoxically

enough, would leave the young untutored mind to the blind guidance of corrupted nature! *—A finishing stroke, reserved for this champion of infidelity! for, was the advice pursued, it requires no sagacity to discern whither it would lead: men would soon be reduced to that wild unsocial state, so much admired by this spritely, but chimerical, writer.

It should be remarked, however, that these sentiments are diametrically opposite to those of the wise, in all ages and countries of the world. The importance of a right education hath abundantly proved itself by the solicitude of all prudent parents, and well regulated states, to give such education to their children and members. Indeed, this hath commonly been made a criterion of their wisdom and policy; and the excellence of commonwealths hath been frequently estimated by their care or neglect of their youth.

And as the sentiments of this writer thus oppose the general opinion of mankind, so are

* See Rousseau's EMILIUS.

they in direct contradiction to those recommended in scripture. Moses, in the strongest manner, commands fathers to instruct their children from their earliest years ; and in Eli we have a fearful example of parental negligence. The wise Man recommends that children should be accustomed to the yoke from their infancy ; and St. Paul frequently exhorts parents to teach and admonish their children : — a practice unquestionably right, upon every idea of the human mind. For were that mind, what some would suppose, a mere *tabula rasa* upon its first coming into the world, a pure and perfect blank, without one single impression ; who can deny that it would be right, that it would be humane and wise, to make, in the earliest moments, those impressions upon it, which long and careful experience hath proved to be just in themselves, and advantageous in their consequences ?

But when we are taught from divine revelation that this idea of the soul is groundless ; when we are assured from thence, that the human mind is corrupt and prone to evil, a truth to which we ourselves must daily bear

ample testimony : it becomes, in this view, a duty of the highest importance ; nay, I will add, of the tenderest humanity, early to supply the infant mind with such maxims, as may prove a sufficient bias to the corruption of its nature, and enable it, through divine grace, to continue stedfast in the practice of virtue.

But, more fully to set forth the importance of religious and early culture, and as an Introduction to some discourses more especially designed, my YOUNG FRIENDS, to promote your establishment and progress in piety and virtue, I propose to shew, That those who enjoy the singular benefit of a pious education, have the greatest probability of success and perseverance in their course ; that they are assured of the divine protection and assistance ; and that many striking advantages, with many solid and durable comforts, are the certain consequences of such an education.

I. “ That there is the greatest probability of success in *their* course, who are early dedicated to the service of religion,” is the first

point to be shewn. Now, it admits of no doubt, that of two travellers, who have the same journey to go, He is much more likely to accomplish it, who, rising betimes in the morning, sets out in all the liveliness and vigour of his strength, than he, who drowsily sleeps till noon, and in the heat and toil of the day can scarce drag his feeble feet along. It admits of no doubt but that He, who from a child hath known those scriptures, whose character, superlatively excellent beyond that of all other books, is, that “they are able to make wise unto salvation, thro’ faith which is in Jesús Christ;”—that He, who, from a child, hath been taught to read and to reverence, to think and to act by those scriptures: it admits of no doubt, but that such a one will be infinitely more likely to persevere in the path of right, than he, who, unacquainted with the wisdom of God, is left to the random pursuits of an unsettled mind, and the strong bias of corrupted passions.

Good principles and habits, early imbibed and formed, are of such power, that they will scarcely permit a wide deviation from

right; and their checks are so forcible and prevalent, that they can never be brought to a satisfactory acquiescence in wrong. Good principles, it is true, may be for some time suppressed; but, like elastic bodies, although they may be kept down a while by superior pressure, yet will they be continually upon the struggle, till their exertion has surmounted every weight.

II. But not merely from this natural tendency of early and right principles, is a probability of perseverance in virtue reasonable; "As Christians we have higher grounds whereon to build hopes of success." For as no good either is or can be perfected in the human mind, without almighty grace, so we have the most solid assurance of that divine assistance, when, in our early days, we carefully cherish the influences of God's holy spirit: and thus, from the morning to the noon of life, are diligent to seek for that celestial guest, who, by the most sacred promise, hath declared, "I love them that love me; and those who seek me early shall find me."

Nor is this only a promise; it is the most condescending call from the Lord of Wisdom; inviting us to his love, by proposing to us that love, invaluable beyond conception, in return for the narrow and unequal tribute of our love to Him: "I love them that love Me." We well know how persuasive this motive of affection is in human nature. Love usually begets love; and we cannot fail to value and esteem those, who, by all means in their power, testify their value and esteem for us: And the great Lord of the universe, that Lord who is love itself, is pleased to declare himself thus affected towards us. Our love to Him shall be repaid, and, oh how abundantly repaid!—repaid by *His* love to us! We cannot, therefore, doubt, but that when from the first dawnings of reason, from the first openings of the thinking mind, we offer up all the first-fruits of our young affections to Him; we cannot doubt, but that *His* tender love will be displayed towards us, in an especial degree; that the dew of his kindly favour will foster, and fully expand in the fairest glow, the fine

S E R M O N I.

69

flower, which in its bud was presented as an humble sacrifice to Him.

And as this promise of God's love to us is a strong argument for our perseverance in the right path, so is it the best and most awakening encouragement of our love to Him. For only reflect a moment, my young friends, what an inexpressible blessing, what an invaluable privilege, what an unspeakable comfort it is, to be loved by the Lord of men and angels; by the eternal King of heaven and earth; by the Father of mercies, and the Author of all good; by the Lord God Almighty, "who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou!" To be loved by Him, whose wondrous power created, whose unfathomable mercy redeemed, whose infinite grace guides, sanctifies, preserves us! —to be loved by Him who is essential love, beauty, goodness, power! in whose presence is life; from whose right hand are poured inexhaustible treasures of felicity and glory! What can *they* want, what need *they* fear,

what may not *they* hope, who are loved by such a God, and such a Father !

Thus, from the natural tendency of early and right principles, and from the certain assurance of the divine assistance and protection, there is the greatest probability of their success and perseverance, who set out early in a virtuous and religious course.

III. But I am to shew further, that “ hence arise many striking advantages.” One of these, and the only one which I shall mention at present, is, that thus the first tincture is given to the mind, the first bias to the affections : that hereby right habits and right principles get the first possession, and preserve the inclination and practice from those warping and destructive customs and opinions, which it is difficult to bend again, and reduce to their original and necessary straitness. The young twig, which, in its first planting, received an improper bent, must be carefully tended while capable of inflection, or the tree will grow up ill-shaped and crooked, as the twig was first inclined. We all know

how strong are the prepossessions and prejudices of education, ill prepossessions and unhappy prejudices; and we may be perfectly satisfied, that good prepossessions and prejudices are equally prevalent and powerful. It is well said by one of the ancients, 'The cask long retains the smell of the liquor with which it was first seasoned *.' Indeed, an early knowledge of virtue and religion, and impressions of a proper sort made upon the mind, when the mind is most susceptible of impression, will scarce ever be erased; but rather will continue to strengthen and improve, as the mind improves and strengthens, and to produce all those happy consequences, which are the fruit of pure and undefiled religion.

The mind of man is so active, and unhappily, through the corruption of our nature, so prone to evil, that, there is no doubt, evil propensities, like tares, will plentifully spring up, and evil practices necessarily fol-

* Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem

Testa diu.—

HORACE.

low, where virtuous and religious culture is neglected. For the mind of man, in some degree, resembles that earth, which, after his fall, he was destined with labour to cultivate; and which must be carefully attended to, diligently cleansed from weeds, properly planted and sown, if we desire a rich and plentiful produce: but if neglected, noxious weeds will spring up, choke the ground, and render it at once unpleasant and unprofitable. So, neglect the culture of the human mind, and it will assuredly produce a plentiful crop of vices, unpleasant and unprofitable: And how hard a task will it be; nay, if to divine grace all things were not possible, we might say, how *impossible* a task! to root out and subdue this overspreading harvest of evil!

How difficult it is to gain the superiority over habits and customs, even in the most trifling matters, no man is ignorant: but to subdue habits which have long lived with us, and gained our approbation; habits of vice, to which sensual affections have annexed pleasure in the gratification; totally to alter

our conduct; to pluck out the right eye of a darling lust, to cut off the right hand of a profitable sin, oh, how arduous, how painful!—Yet, if we would be the servants of Christ, and gain the kingdom of heaven, this is our indispensable duty, where such criminal habits and vices have got the sway. Here, then, we discern the unspeakable advantage of early good habits and principles; which, preserving us in the road of duty, secure us from this most difficult, if not, in some cases, impossible task, of correcting vicious habits, and amending corrupted customs and notions, which, through long possession, become intimate to men almost as themselves. Early Piety, therefore, is of the highest profit, in this single view; as it tends to keep us steadfast in the duty we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; to make our salvation probable and easy, which evil habits render in many cases desperate, in every case difficult.

But not less comfortable than advantageous will the early dedication of ourselves to God be found. To be perfectly satisfied of this,

let us take a brief view, my young friends, of the miseries arising from the practice of vice, of the pleasures resulting from the practice of virtue. All vice is, and ever must be, accompanied with uneasiness, pain, and sorrow, for this plain reason; because it is in immediate contradiction to the nature and end of man. Vice was, originally, no way connected with the human nature: man was created perfect: through envy of the Tempter came death, its forerunner sin, and its attendant sorrow. Sorrow, sin, and death, have from thenceforth been inseparable companions; and men may as well hope to find satisfaction, and to secure happiness to themselves, by walking in the midst of a fiery furnace, as by walking in the pestilent and contagious haunts of vice. If we reflect only a little further, that man was created for God, and that God is a being of infinite and un sullied purity, and therefore perfectly happy, we must be convinced that vice, as being at the utmost distance from Him who is holiness and happiness, can be only productive of misery. This too is equally plain from the immediate contrariety of vice to

the health and the peace of human nature: diseases, terrible in sort, and countless in number, croud the monster's train: disquietude and inward dismay, quarrels, outward offences, and contentions, are her never-failing attendants. But, above all, if we consider not only that vice is contrary to our own nature, to the nature of our God, to health, and to peace, but,—so virulent in its nature, so offensive and deep in its guilt,—that it caused the only begotten Son of God to be put to shame, and to die upon the cross for a world of sinners; it will appear abundantly evident, that an early dedication of ourselves to God, cannot fail to be comfortable, as preserving us from that misery, which is the inevitable consequence of sin.

But when, on the other hand, you take a view of the blessings and pleasures resulting from the practice of virtue and religion, you will never be inticed from the fair and blessed path, by any allurements of vice, by any seductions of evil.

For, early initiated into the delightful road to heaven, you will find that road, the fur-

ther you advance upon it, the more pleasant and blisful. The sense of God's favour and love will diffuse an unspeakable serenity over your souls. The consciousness that you are acting that part for which the All-wise formed and designed you, that you are travelling, short-lived pilgrims, through a wilderness of trial, to an happy Canaan of consummate rest: This will fill your souls with constant thanksgiving and chearfulness; and enable you, with a right lowly and grateful heart, to pass the time of your sojourning here below. Your beneficent and becoming conduct, will, in a great measure, endear you to your fellow-creatures, or at least to such as you would most wish to be dear to, the virtuous and the good; and every circumstance in life, will thus be rendered easy. Is Adversity your lot; doth the hand of heaven lie hard upon you, to prove your faith, and enhance your future reward? Your principles and due regard to religion, will render adversity itself the school of virtue, and enable you to say, with all the humility of child-like resignation; "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." On the other side, should Prosperity, from

the God of all events, crown and attend you; should greatness and riches accompany you; the sweets of domestic felicity surround you, and the heads of men bow down to you in honour and respect: The same religious principles will still prevail to guard you as well from this dangerous sun-shine, as from the former chilling blasts. They will teach you wisely to use your prosperity; to consider yourselves as stewards of that God, from whom you have received all things, and to whom you must one day render up an account: they will protect you as well from elation, presumption, and pride, in this state, as from dejection, murmuring, and complaint in the former.

In short, an early knowledge of, and a persevering attention to, the great truths of the gospel of Christ, will teach you content in every station; will enable you to sail through life with as much ease and serenity, as the unavoidable difficulties of this transitory state will admit; will give to your mind the purest pleasures, and most satisfactory enjoyments; will make you a comfort to yourselves, a blessing

sing to your friends, and above all, a blessing and an ornament to society.

Such are some of the comforts, the advantages of Early Piety; many more might easily be enumerated. I must not however pass over one comfort, one advantage, to which I am persuaded no generous or feeling heart can be insensible. The comfort, I mean, my young friends, of crowning the kind care of your parents; the advantage of blessing their tender and heart-felt solicitude for your sakes. Could you be sensible of the anxious thoughts, the sleepless nights, the watchful days, which they have passed for you; could you be sensible of the bleeding fears, the affectionate hopes, and all the unutterable concern which throbs in the parental breast: a sympathetick gratitude would fill your souls, and you would think it your highest happiness, as, be sure, it is your indispensable duty, by every possible means to make them some amends; and to sooth the decline of their days, by all the lenient assuatives of filial piety and love. And oh! how exquisitely comfortable, how divinely

pleasing, “to rock the cradle of declining age;” to return the unspeakable obligations of parental care: to tend the bed of the languishing and affectionate parent; and to draw from their trembling lips, a blessing on the day which made them parents, which gave them children to afford such consolation, in the hour of greatest need!

Let the tender parent look to that hour;—to the hour, when age and infirmities shall oppress him; to the years when life begins to grow dark and cold: and let him consult his own heart, whether then, he would be slighted, disregarded, dishonoured; would have his aged bosom torn with the vices and follies of his children; or would then be revered, esteemed, consulted, attended, and have a perpetual pleasure in their wise and regular conduct.—And as he finds that heart reply, so let him “for the sake of his own happiness” form the minds of his children to virtue and religion.

Let him further look to those children, either, on the one hand, as filling up their

stations in society with honour to themselves, and emolument to mankind; or, as disgracing their Birth By useless, shameless, and immoral lives; a reproach to their family, and a nuisance to the commonwealth: and “for the sake of his country,” let him carefully improve the young mind, by implanting those principles which are the only foundation of moral obedience.

But let the tender parent look further still to his children, as members of an eternally happy, or eternally miserable state: let him contemplate them, either as reproaching him,—amidst the fearful torments of that doleful mansion, where peace, and rest, and hope which comes to all, shall never come; reproaching the wretched author of their birth, as the cause of their unutterable distress, through his fatal neglect of their pious and early instruction: Or, on the other hand, let him behold the children which God hath given him on earth joyfully approaching with himself the throne of glory; while with humble confidence, he can thankfully present them, and say, “Behold, Lord, of those whom thou hast given

me, I have lost none : carefully and early instructed in the duty which they owed to thee, and to their fellow-creatures, they persevered faithful unto the end ; and now Thou wilt bestow upon them the rewards of everlasting life." Let the parent contemplate this contrast ; let him consider himself as the father of immortals, whose eternal fate depends upon his diligence and early culture, and can HE want motives to exert every probable effort to save from perdition, to bless with compleat salvation, the children which God hath given him ?

Every motive stimulates to this duty : our own happiness, and what is dearer often to affectionate parents, the happiness of their beloved offspring ! And not only these, but the happiness also of society, which immediately depends upon the right education of youth, especially of those in the more exalted spheres of life. Their superior stations, call them to the most important duties for their country ; and from their example and authority, if virtuous, the highest blessings ; if vicious, the most destructive evils must follow.

But how should the example of those deserve imitation, who themselves in early life, have had no good examples before them, nor been instructed in those sentiments, which give uniformity to conduct, and to authority respect? For they who are not accustomed to bear the yoke in their youth; who are then undisciplined in the principles of piety and religion; who are uninstructed in the relations which they bear to God, and their fellow-creatures; uninstructed in the true state of their own souls, the frailty and weakness of their nature in general; the justice, humanity, and benevolence they owe to all mankind; the certainty of that death, which levels all distinctions; and of that judgement, from which no earthly distinction can procure a discharge: Such, however their Understandings may be improved, if their Hearts be thus neglected, and left to stagnate on the lees of depraved affections, will, certainly, not only be found a burden to society, but a misery to themselves, and a curse to their parents. And it will be fruitless to expect elevation of thought, and greatness of action

from those, who neither fear God, reverence themselves, or love their fellow-creatures.

As therefore the importance of early and right culture is so great, may God inspire every order of men amongst us with an anxious sollicitude to bless mankind, themselves, and their children, by affording those children such an education! and may His grace and assistance, crown the patriotic endeavours of all, who thus eminently consult for the piety and happiness of the succeeding generation! may that generation rise up to honour and serve Him: may they prove a comfort to their parents, a blessing to themselves, an ornament to the community: good children, good subjects, good christians, through Jesus Christ, &c.

THIS Sermon, having been preached at many places, and on different occasions, the Author is glad of the present opportunity to gratify the request of those who have frequently called for it: But, as they who heard it at some places, may possibly remember “the Rules of Advice,” with which it was occasionally concluded; and may be disappointed, if they find them not here; it is thought proper to subjoin them instead of ANECDOTES, which will be affixed to the following Discourses, in order to impress the subject of them more forcibly.

RULES OF ADVICE TO PARENTS*.

“ In care, reproof, correction, and encouragement, husband and wife should act in perfect concert. Teach your children submission to yourselves, or you will be able to teach them nothing beside. Remove all bad examples, far as possible from their sight. Understand yourselves, what you would have your children understand: be yourselves, what you would

* See “Advice to a Daughter,” and the “Reflections on Death.”

“ have your children be : do yourselves,
“ what you would have your children prac-
“ tise : parents are the original models, after
“ which children form their tempers and
“ behaviour. Gradually infuse into the
“ empty mind the clearest and most affect-
“ ing notions of God, his omnipresence,
“ almighty power, his goodness, and over-
“ ruling providence, his regard to pious
“ men, his hearing and answering prayer.
“ Impress these things upon the tender spirit,
“ and fix them by scripture instances ; as
“ of Noah, Abraham, Josiah, the Israelites
“ passage through the Red Sea, their being
“ fed with manna ; the deliverance of Daniel ;
“ the three children, and the like. Let
“ them frequently hear serious discourse
“ upon religious, and heavenly subjects ; they
“ will listen and catch the same spirit. Shew
“ them the vanity of the world, the frailty
“ of the body, the fall and corruption of
“ our nature, the dignity and infinite worth
“ of the soul. Shew them what hath been
“ done for that soul, and make them ac-
“ quainted with the deep riches of redeem-
“ ing grace. Often inculcate, that they

“ are made not to live here below, but in
“ the glorious and eternal world above:
“ and that they are here, only to have their
“ virtue tried and exercised, that they may
“ be fit to live for ever in Heaven. Habituate
“ them to sanctify the sabbath; to esteem
“ highly the word of God, to reverence his
“ ordinances, and to respect his ministers.
“ And be careful, that, with all religious
“ instruction, they imbibe a spirit of uni-
“ versal candor, goodness, and charity; as
“ far from the wildness of enthusiasm, as
“ from the narrowness of superstition and
“ bigotry. Address their understandings,
“ encourage their enquiries, and use them
“ betimes to think, and to reason. Repre-
“ sent Vice, in its true, that is, in the most
“ odious; Virtue, in its true, that is, the
“ most amiable colours. Especially, give
“ them a deep sense of truth and integrity;
“ and an abhorrence of all manner of false-
“ hood, fraud, craft, subterfuge, and dis-
“ simulation, as base and dishonourable, and
“ highly displeasing to God. You cannot
“ cherish veracity too much. Never be se-
“ vere for any fault they ingenuously ac-

“ knowledge ; but, while you are con-
“ vincing them of the wrong they have
“ done, honour and commend them for the
“ truth they have spoken. Give them a low
“ opinion of splendor and show, and deceive
“ them not into wrong thoughts of them-
“ selves, by gaudy, external ornaments.
“ Teach them to reverence the human na-
“ ture, even in the poorest of the species ;
“ suffer them not to treat any with con-
“ tempt ; but cherish a spirit of benevolence
“ and compassion, gentleness and modesty.
“ Check a pert, bold, forward behaviour ; it
“ may grow up into an unruly, dissolute in-
“ solence. Suffer them not to be men and
“ women, but as years and understanding
“ allow : Children are by no means fit to
“ govern themselves, or to direct others.
“ Inure them to diligence and close applica-
“ tion (properly intermixed with diversions
“ and play) when they are strong enough to
“ apply to learning ; and let them want no
“ advantage of increasing in knowledge and
“ wisdom, which you can procure, and they
“ can improve ; for this will be a benefit to
“ them, superior, perhaps, to any other you

“ may have to bestow. Great care is to be
“ taken, if they are placed out for education,
“ in the choice of an instructor; and, in-
“ deed, great is the difficulty attending such
“ a choice. Your study, however, should
“ be to find one, who regards the morals of
“ the children under his care, not less than
“ the profit accruing from them; who
“ considers the education of children, not
“ merely as a trade, whereby to get bread,
“ but as an important trust, whereof he must
“ one day give a solemn account; and there-
“ fore will be conscientiously diligent to
“ teach them those maxims of virtue and
“ religion, which will always make a man
“ a good citizen, and a good christian;
“ which are better characters, (if they are
“ to be separated) than a good scholar, or
“ a wise worldling.”

If you proceed thus, you may rest persuaded,
that your sincere and pious endeavours will
not be in vain. The nature of things, and
the promise of God, insure success.

S E R M O N II.

The fatal Consequences of youthful Deviations and Excess.

L U K E X V. 13.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

TH E parable of the prodigal is no less beautiful and pathetic, than it is instructive and consolatory. It sets before us, in the most striking view, the progress and fatal consequence of vice, on one hand; and on the other, the paternal readiness of our Almighty Father to receive the returning penitent to pardon and mercy. It is peculiarly instructive to youth; and would become very instrumental to preserve them from the pernicious allurements of sin and folly, if they would seriously reflect upon it; if they would contemplate, in the example of the prodigal before them, the nature and the

effects of those vices, which brought him to extreme distress, and which will ever bring to distress all those who indulge them.

We have seen, in the foregoing sermon, the many and great advantages, which will follow from an early attachment to the paths of piety and virtue. It may therefore be proper, before we enter upon a delineation of particular duties, to contemplate the opposite scene; to review, by way of contrast, the fatal consequences, which naturally spring from youthful deviations and excess; to mark the progress of the thoughtless and vicious young man's ruin, as emphatically described in the parable.—That those of you, my beloved young friends, who have not yet launched out into the world, and have been thus far happily secured from the dire contagion of iniquity, may persevere, admonished by the example, in the happy paths of sobriety and religion:—That those of you, who have made any false steps, and have turned aside at all from these happy paths, may, at least, check your progress; may stand still, and consider what the issue of a further advance

will be; and may return, warned by the unavoidable dangers, to the ways of virtue and truth: Ways, which never youth repented that he had early and diligently trod; though thousands have sad cause to repent that they ever forsook them, in ruined health, ruined fortune, ruined reputation, ruined peace and hope! God Almighty forbid, that this should be the case of any amongst you! Oh! may his grace preserve and protect you! And let me entreat,—as no motive, but an earnest wish for your real welfare, could induce me to lay these truths before you, let me entreat, that you will give them a serious hearing now, and an impartial consideration afterwards. And if what is offered doth not approve itself to be conducive to your best present and future happiness, reject and despise it: but if reason, experience, and religion, all unite to attest the truth; resist not these, but make me happy,—rather, make your beloved parents and friends happy, by chusing that better part; which we wish to recommend to your choice, for this single reason only, because it will infallibly produce your felicity.

The younger son in the parable thought not so: the experience and advice of his father were by no means sufficient for him: he thought himself much wiser, no doubt, than the preaching old man; and heard, as is often the case with youth, his good father's counsels with a weary and painful attention; supposing, that he wished to withhold him from happiness. Vain and unthinking! as if a tender parent would ever grudge his child any true and proper satisfaction. The young man was determined, however, to judge for himself; and to be wise by his own experience. Pride had got footing in his heart; and now impatient of parental dominion, and anxious for independence, he requests his father to give him that independence. The good man, wearied, perhaps, by his importunities, grants him his wish, and permits him to make the hazardous trial.

No sooner is he in possession of the portion allotted him, than he hastes away with it, far from the presence of that indulgent parent, who possibly, by much fatigue and much anxiety, had procured this fortune for his son:

And now, all his parental love and care is repaid by a base desertion of him, by an ungrateful removal from his presence; which, indeed, could not fail to be irksome to a young man, determined upon a course of gaiety,—as, no doubt, he would call a life of disobedience to his father,—destruction to himself, and contempt of his God: For such was the life he led.

He fell into a course of riot and prodigality, indulging all those youthful lusts, which, in the heat of blood, are fancied the sole enjoyments, are called the only pleasures! Prodigality and riotous living necessarily infer idleness, foppery, and bad company of every sort; and who is there proof against these? What health, or what fortune are sufficient to support them? None ever was, or ever will be; and therefore no wonder they brought our young adventurer to destruction. “He wasted all his substance in riotous living; he devoured his estate with harlots!” we are told: and the sad consequence to him was neglect, contempt and beggary. He was now despised by all, whom he had sed and sup-

ported in his day of riot and extravagance :
contemned even by those who had shared his
bounty, and hastened his ruin ! wretches
who have no bowels or feeling, no generosity
or honour ; and who never have but one
motive for their regard, the motive of their
own immediate interest. Cast out, and
scorned by all, he was reduced to the utmost
extremity ; ready to perish with hunger ; and
in this sad case, once more bethought him of
the affectionate parent, whom he had so un-
gratefully used ; and to whom, in a miserable
plight, all humble and submissive, at length,
he returns ! while, to witness the amiable
force of parental affection, the tender father,
we are informed, melted to behold his suffer-
ing child, relented, forgave, and received
him to his bosom and his love !

Now let us observe, in this fine picture,
the steps, by which the prodigal advanced to
his ruin.

I. Impatience of parental controul, and a
desire of independency, was the first bad tem-
per which shewed itself in his mind, and which

led on to every future evil. A temper, too apt to arise in the minds of youth, and springing from that pride, which is alas! but too deeply rooted in our corrupt nature, and which cannot be subdued and kept under too much by early culture. For, when once this fond desire of acting without all restraint, and indulging its own inclination, gets possession of a youthful heart, the gentle authority even of the most kind and prudent parents too commonly becomes a burden: all their tender remonstrances are overlooked or disregarded; or, at least, considered only as intended to fix and continue that restraint, which the eager youth so much wishes to overleap.*

2. It is no wonder, when this impatience of parental controul strongly operates on the mind, that the presence and observation of a parent is of all things most displeasing, and consequently of all things most to be avoided: This was the second bad disposition, which the prodigal discovered. Soon as he

* See the next Sermon, on "Filial Piety."

had gained his allotted portion, “ he took his journey into a far country;” he retreated far as possible from the eye and notice of his father, whose advice and remonstrances, as he was determined not to regard, he was determined not to hear, or be molested by them. And thus it is with those who tread in steps like his. If they cannot remove to a distance from their parents, they will, at least, secrete their actions from them to the utmost of their power. A certain badge, and ever to be dreaded in all youthful hearts !

For why should you wish, my young friends, to secrete any thing from those, who love you with the most tender affection, and who are more interested in your welfare, than they are even in their own ? What you keep secret from them must either be a matter of advantage, or the contrary : If it be the former, you act most unkindly by them ; as the knowledge of it would give them the greatest satisfaction : But if, as is generally the case, what you keep private is vicious and detrimental, think how simple a part you act, in harbouring thoughts, or doing deeds,

which you dare not discover to Them, who love you better than themselves ; and who certainly, not only by their love, but by their knowledge, are best fitted to advise what is most for your good ; and consequently, should never be kept in ignorance of any of your designs or connections,

3. Determined, however, to gratify his passions, the youth is deaf to every argument of affection and utility ; till, like the prodigal, he commences “ Riotous Liver :” this is the certain consequence of youthful independence, and a disregard of parents. This riotous living includes, not only an indulgence of lust and criminal passions ; but a waste of present substance, by all the destructive ways of prodigality, idleness, dissipation with bad company, * the wretched foppery of dress, and all the abuse of language by lying, swearing, and obscenity.

Now let the youth, in the coolness of reflection, seriously review a life spent amidst

* See the following Sermons, on “ Bad Company” and “ Pleasure.”

vices like these, and consider, whether it is possible to attain, by such a life, the end at which he aims. All reasonable creatures act to some end: and the end, which young people propose to themselves, is the obtaining of pleasure, or at least, of higher pleasure than that which parental restraint allows. But how shall They judge, who yet have seen or known little of mankind and the world, in what consists their best and truest pleasure? If they are actuated only by self opinion and conceit; if they judge themselves superior in wisdom to all with whom they are connected; it is reasonable, either that they should give some proof of such superior wisdom, or, at least, be taught, that high self-opinion is always an indication of a want of Wisdom, which ever dwells with Humility. If then they are not so opinionated as to deem themselves wiser than others, they may reasonably be expected to listen to the information of those, who have lived longer, and known more of the world, than themselves. And the joint voice of all such will be, “ that the indulgence of youthful lusts necessarily leads to ruin and to misery :

That bad company, whether of the male or female kind, but the latter more especially, is the surest bane, and the most poisonous corrupter of all good principles and all good manners: that idleness is the root of all evil, introductory of almost every vice: that foppery, and an absurd affectation of dress, ever tend to make ridiculous, and raise only the smiles and contempt of the judicious; who have long been agreed, that neatness, decency, and propriety, are, in this respect, the true ornaments:—That lying is the most mean and abject vice, rendering youth as dangerous as despicable, and sowing the seeds of a very worthless and contemptible character in future life: That swearing or obscenity in discourse are utterly inexcusable; as having no plea of pleasure or utility to urge in their defence; as being the greatest affront to the Majesty of Heaven, and the surest indication of a very depraved, as well as of a very weak mind: That prodigality will certainly end in the ruin of all temporal substance, and never procures a friend; for all men, even the most abandoned, however they may help to drain him, always despise the

thoughtless prodigal. It is by true generosity and benevolence, whose foundation is laid in prudent œconomy, that the friendship and love of mankind are secured."

Now if youth would only be so wise, as to listen to these truths, they could not fail to have an effect upon them; especially if they would consider, that these truths are so well known and approved, that all men are agreed in them. They are not matters of any doubtful speculation; they are as certain and determinate, as the existence of the sun himself in the heavens: And as there can be no question, that the indulgence of the vices here specified tends to misery, sorrow and ruin, more or less conformable to that of the young man's in the parable; so can there, on the other hand, be no doubt, but the avoiding of these vices, and the cultivation of the contrary virtues, will, by the grace of God, produce present peace and future happiness.

Suffer me, therefore, my young friends, earnestly to exhort you to grow wise from

S E R M O N II.

41

this example of the prodigal ; and to learn from thence what you should chuse, and what you should shun, to make you, what I am sure you all wish to be, a blessing to yourselves, a comfort to your parents, and an ornament to our holy religion.

To this end, seriously reflect on the steps, by which his ruin was perfected ; and enquire, whether it is not in the very nature of those vices which he indulged, always, and in every instance, to produce the effects which he experienced. Search, and know whether ever any man procured true happiness, or confessed that he enjoyed solid comfort, from the unlimited gratification of his passions, from his neglect of duty and of God : Search and know, whether thousands have not most severely felt the sad effects of such gratifications, and deplored, in extreme distress, their fatal consequences : whether thousands, disregardful in youth of counsel and restraint, have not brought themselves into the most calamitous circumstances of fortune, of body, and of soul. On the other hand, search and enquire diligently, whether any man was

ever yet found upon the earth, who regretted at the close of life, that he had too cautiously avoided the snares and evils of youthful lusts; that he had too soon entered upon the paths of virtue and religion; * that he had served his God, and obeyed the holy rules of his divine Saviour too much or too exactly. An instance of this sort was never yet heard of; and surely no stronger argument can be urged in behalf of virtue, and of that preference, which you ought to give it in your choice.

Let it too be a consideration of no small weight with you, that the more carefully you walk in the paths of sobriety during your early days, the more diligently you guard against the entrance of every vice, and prevent it from becoming in any degree habitual; the more easy will you find it to persevere. Whereas, if once vice gains an entrance, much more if it becomes habitual, you will find the retreat difficult and embarrassed; * and, perhaps, from the strong power of

* * See the foregoing Sermon.

S E R M O N II. 43

habit, may be led on in the gratification of what your better judgment disapproves, and consequently must perpetually condemn.

Beware, therefore, of Beginnings! be cautious of your first steps! preserve yourselves pure! * and let temptations to independence and impatience of parental controul especially, be checked in their first rise. The better to effect which, arm yourselves with every proper consideration; particularly remember, that whatever wishes you may have for a freedom from restraint, your parents must certainly be the best judges of your fitness for such freedom. If therefore they restrain your inclinations; never receive their controul with impatience; but always reason thus: "My parents have, doubtless, the tenderest affection for me; I have had innumerable proofs of their love; and I can never suppose, that the good father, who has taken such kind care of me hitherto; that the beloved mother, who so tenderly supported me at

* *Free youthful lists*; was St. Paul's advice, even to Timothy; and consequently cannot be unworthy the best attention of every young person.

her own breast, and has always shewn the most solicitous attention to my welfare; I can never suppose that they would restrain me from any thing, which would make me truly happy; that they would ever advise me to any thing, but what will lead to my good. They have lived longer, seen and known more, and are wiser than myself. I am determined, therefore, to subdue my own inclinations, and contentedly to acquiesce in all their counsels and directions."

Fixed in such a determination;—and which of you can deny that such a determination is most wise and reasonable?—and joining to it a constant attention to duty, and a care to approve yourselves in the eyes of your divine Redeemer; you will need but few directions more, to guard you from evil. This wise resolution, invariably pursued, you will find your best preservative.

Conducted by it, you will have no need to fly, like the prodigal, from the presence and observation of your parents: you will have no need to secrete yourself or your

actions from them. On the contrary, the company and presence of your parents will be most delightful to you; an ingenuous frankness and openness will prevail between you; you will find an unspeakable serenity and satisfaction in administering to the best comforts of those, to whom you owe the highest obligations; and, in the endeavour to return which, in some degree at least, there is, be sure, the highest pleasure. As it is impossible to conceive either an object more hateful, or a pain more afflicting, than that of a child, by a life of disobedience and immorality, racking the good heart of an affectionate and endearing parent!

Oh! my young friends, I am persuaded you have too much ingenuity, generosity, and tenderness of soul, ever to act so ungrateful a part, ever to occasion so deep a sorrow: at least, if you expect happiness here or hereafter, if you expect favour either from God or man, avoid so base an evil; and by lives of duty and religion, by a conscientious denial and subdual of all youthful lusts; by avoiding all bad company and connections,

by diligently employing yourselves, and by keeping your tongues from all indecency and offence, endear yourselves more and more to your parents: give them cause to bless God perpetually for you; give them cause to rejoice, that amidst all the temptations of vice, amidst all the perils which so abundantly surround unwary youth in our days, and in the metropolis especially, where every step should be taken with the utmost caution; give them cause to rejoice, that God's goodness hath preserved you unpolluted, and that you live a blessing to them, and the child of a better, even an everlasting father! What consolation must arise in the breast of a parent on that thought; when beholding his child, he beholds a child also of virtue and of God: and when, in the hour of death, his affectionate eyes are closed by that dear child, whom he doubts not to meet again, ere long, in everlasting bliss!

Give then, oh! give this exquisite felicity to your parents. To which end, begin early, contend resolutely, and maintain your ground perseveringly. Think, on one hand, what

a divine pleasure must transfuse itself through that mind, which can enjoy the satisfaction above-mentioned; and on the other hand, take a brief view of the anguish, which must afflict the souls both of that parent and that child, in the circumstances of those represented in the parable.

Make the case your own: You are now blest with fond and indulgent parents; Suppose yourself uneasy under their restraint, and, at length, become independent of them, and following your own inclinations. And, suppose,——what too surely would be found the case, if you were to be so unhappy as to fall into such a method of life; which God forbid!——yet, suppose, that indulging those inclinations to the full, surrounded with bad company, prodigal, wasteful, riotous, and idle; lulled on the lap of harlots, and reclined on the bed of sensuality; forgetful of every thing virtuous and praise-worthy; your mind drunk and intoxicated as it were with lust and vice: Suppose, that the unavoidable consequences of such a life have befallen you; and that now, like the pro-

digal, your substance all wasted ; your friends, mere summer friends ! all flown ; your health, perhaps, greatly injured, your reputation ruined, and yourself in extreme pain and penury : Suppose, in this sad case, you see yourself returning to the once-loved house of your affectionate parents. Oh ! with what anxious horror would you then enter those gates, and cross that threshold, as a stranger and an outcast, which you now enter, you now cross with so much delight and freedom. With what inexpressible anguish would you meet those parents, whom now you see with such pleasing satisfaction ! Imagine that you behold the mother you love, bathed in tears of anguish and distress, running to embrace her ruined child. Imagine that you see your beloved father, grown old in cares and sorrows upon your account, turning his weeping face away from you, and unable to sustain the shock of your wretched appearance ! Imagine the inexpressible torture which must arise in your own heart, on seeing the grief you occasion, on feeling that your ill-conduct has been the cause of it all. And as you would wish to

avoid such anguish yourself, much more as you wish to save your beloved parents from such anguish; carefully avoid every thing, which may, in the least degree, tend to the introduction of so sad a catastrophe. Carefully avoid every thing which may give rise to the least probability of so complicated a distress. To which end, bear the contrast in mind, which I have here pictured out; the contrast of the virtuous and dutiful child closing the eyes of a beloved and blessing parent; and that of a disobedient and worthless one, returning home to his parents in ruin, poverty, and distress.

And as the contrast cannot fail to influence your minds, by God's grace, so be assured, that if not in exactly the same degree and manner, yet the certain consequence of obedience and virtue, is peace and life;—of disobedience, and indulgence in forbidden and unallowed gratifications, is misery, is ruin, is present and eternal sorrow. From which may God, &c.

ANECDOTES, respecting Youthful Deviations
and Excess.

I. A lewd young fellow seeing an aged Hermit go by him barefoot, "Father, said he, you are in a very miserable condition, if there is not another world."—"True, Son, replied the Hermit, but what is thy condition, if there is?" On this striking and singular occasion, the celebrated *Spectator* very naturally urges the following reflections. "Man, says he, is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather, for two different lives. His first life is short and transient; his second, permanent and lasting. The question we are all concerned in, is this, "In which of these two lives it is our chief interest to make ourselves happy?" Or, in other words, "Whether should we endeavour to secure to ourselves the pleasures and gratifications of a life, which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmost length of a very inconsiderable duration; or to secure to ourselves the pleasures of a life which is fixed and settled, and will never end?"—Every man, upon the first hearing of the question, knows very well which side of it he ought to close

with. But, however right we are in theory, it is plain, that in practice we adhere to the wrong side of the question. We make provision for this life, as though it was never to have an end; and for the other life, as though it were never to have a beginning." The inconsistency of such a conduct is glaring; even at the worst; even supposing (what seldom happens) that a course of virtue makes us miserable in this life: But, if we suppose, (as it generally happens) that virtue would make us more happy, even in this life, than a contrary course of vice; how can we sufficiently admire the stupidity or madness of those persons, who are capable of making so absurd a choice? Every wise man therefore will consider this life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other; and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years, to those of an eternity."

2. Ctesippus the son of Chabrias, a noble Athenian, was so profusely expensive, that after he had lavishly consumed all his goods and other estate, he put to sale even the very stones of his father's tomb, in the build-

ing whereof the Athenians had disbursed a thousand drachmas.

3. In the year 1470, the tenth of Edward IV. George Neville, brother to the great Earl of Warwick, at his installment into the Archbishoprick of York, made a prodigious feast to all the nobility, most of the principal clergy, and many of the great commoners; the catalogue of which alone, as given by different writers, is sufficient to excite satiety and disgust. The Earl of Warwick was steward on the occasion, the Earl of Bedford treasurer, and the Lord Hastings comptroller, with many other officers; to which we may add one thousand servitors, sixty-two cooks, and five hundred and fifteen menial apparitors in the kitchen.—But, seven years after, fortune shifted the scenes; for the king seizing on all his estate, sent him over prisoner to Calais, where *vinctus jacuit in summâ inopiâ*, he was kept bound in extreme poverty: Justice thus punishing his former prodigality.

4. There is a single passage in Herodotus, which might supply the place of many ex-

amples. When Cyrus had received an account that the Lydians had revolted from him, he told Crœsus, with a good deal of emotion, that he had almost determined to make them all slaves. Crœsus intreated him to pardon them; “ But, added he, that they may no more rebel or be troublesome to you, command them to lay aside their arms, and to wear long vests and buskins; (that is, to vie with each other in the indolent elegance and richness of their dress.) Order them to sing and play upon the harp; let them drink and debauch with impunity; and you will soon see their spirits broken, and themselves changed from men to women, so that they will no more rebel, or give you any uneasiness. The hint had too much sanction from experience not to appear plausible; and the event effectually answered the advice.

5. In the winter season, says Æsop, a commonwealth of Ants were busily employed in the management and preservation of their stock of corn; which they carefully exposed to the air in heaps, round the avenues of their little rural habitation. A Grasshopper,

who had chanced to outlive the summer and autumn, and was ready to starve with cold and hunger, approached with great humility and dejection, and begged they would relieve his necessity, if it were but with one grain of wheat or rye. One of the ants asked him how he had disposed of his time and talents in summer, and why he had not taken pains to lay in a stock, as they had done. "Alas! said he, I passed away the hours in mirth and festivity; drinking, dance, and song, occupied my thoughts; and I never once dreamed of a succeeding winter." "O improvident creature! replied the ant, with emotion, if that be the case, I can only in justice say, that those who drink, sing, and dance in summer, must expect, ere long, to smart under the rigours and penury of winter."

6. The Poet's advice is as unquestionably true as the voice of an oracle;

*Principiis obsta : Serò medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.*

The practice which at first was indifferent, will very probably, in a short time, acquire

the inflexibility of habit. “ The memory of a well spent youth (says a celebrated writer) gives a peaceable, unmixed and elegant pleasure to the mind : and such who are so unfortunate as not to look back on youth with satisfaction, may give themselves no little consolation, that they are under no temptation to repeat their follies, and that they at present despise them. It was prettily said, ‘ He that would be long an old man, must begin early to be one.’ It is too late to resign a thing, after a man is robbed of it; and therefore it becomes necessary, that before the arrival of age, we bid adieu to the pursuits of youth : Otherwise sensual habits will live in our imaginations, when our limbs can no longer be subservient to them.”

7. How wretched is the condition of Afotus ! A little garret, with bare walls, is his whole apartment ; and of this, a flock bed covered with rags, takes up two thirds. Cold, nakedness, and shame, compel him to lie on that bed, till the day is far spent. At night, a lamp suited to the place, a true sepulchral lamp, rather adds horror, than

diffuses light. By the feeble glimmering of this languid flame, he eats a dry crust of brown bread, his whole repast ! Yet, poor as it is, he is not sure that he shall be able to renew it to-morrow : For he cannot dig ; and to beg he is ashamed ! What now is become of his countless treasure, his immense revenues, which appeared sufficient to maintain a province ?—It may as well be asked, what becomes of the water poured into the sieve, or of wax thrown into a furnace. Luxurious entertainments, gaming, women, usurers, and his steward, are the bottomless gulphs which have swallowed up his opulence. But, is there not one, among all his friends, who knows him in his adversity, and stretches out the hand of bounty for his relief ? Is there not one, among all his friends ?—Alas ! had he ever a friend ? If he had, he would have him still ; for, whatever may have been said, “ Adversity never banished a friend :” it only disperses those, who unjustly arrogate the name ; and, if adversity is productive of any good, (which cannot be denied) this is one of its principal advantages ; for the loss of a false friend, is a real gain. If Aſotus

has any cause of complaint, it is only for want of wisdom, and of never having had a friend that was sincere.

8. The above fancy-pourtrait, is by no means destitute of originals in real life. We have a remarkable instance in George Villiers, created by James I. Earl, Marquis, and afterwards Duke of Buckingham, and invested with many high and lucrative offices. He is described to have been a gay capricious nobleman, of some wit, and great vivacity; the minister of riot, and counsellor of infamous practices; the slave of intemperance; a pretended Atheist, without honour or principle, œconomy or discretion; and who, after various mal-proceedings and vicissitudes of fortune, after a justly merited disgrace from the very court which fostered him, and an imprisonment in the Tower for sometime; at last, in the reign of Charles II. deserted by all his friends, and despised by all the world, died in the greatest want and obscurity. Mr. Pope has so beautifully painted these circumstances in his epistle "On the Use of Riches," that we flatter ourselves they will not be

thought ill applied, in furtherance of our general plan.

“ In the worst inn’s worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung;
On once a flock-bed, but repair’d with straw,
With tape-ty’d curtains, never meant to draw;
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where taudry yellow strove with dirty red;
Great *Williers* lies:—Alas! how chang’d from Him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Clivedens proud alcove,
The Bower of wanton Shrewsbury and Love;
Or, just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimick statesmen, and their merry King.
No wit to flatter, left of all his store!
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more!
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this Lord of useless thousands ends!”

9. Henry the fifth, King of England, while he was Prince of Wales, by his loose and dissolute conduct was daily giving his father great cause of pain and anxiety. His court was the common receptacle of libertines, debauchees, buffoons, parasites, and all those species of vermin, which are at once the disgrace and ruin of young Princes. The wild and riotous exploits of the Prince and his companions were the general topicks of conversation, and furnished equal matter of astonish-

ment and detestation. This sad degeneracy in the heir of his crown, was not more disagreeable to the King himself, who loved him with the most tender affection, than it was alarming to the nation in general; who trembled at the prospect of being one day governed by a Prince of his flagitious character. But their fears, to the universal admiration of all, were happily removed; for, no sooner had the young King assumed the reins of government, than he shewed himself to be extremely worthy of the high station to which he was advanced. He called together the dissolute companions of his youth; acquainted them with his intended reformation; advised them to imitate his good example; and, after having forbidden them to appear in his presence again, if they continued in their former courses, he dismissed them with liberal presents. He next chose a new council, composed of the wisest and the best men in the kingdom; he reformed the courts of law, by discarding ignorant and corrupt judges, and supplying their places with persons of courage, knowledge, and integrity. Even the chief justice Gascoigne,

* who had committed young Henry to prison for a former misdemeanor, and who on that account trembled to approach the royal presence, was received with the utmost cordiality and friendship; and, instead of being reproved for his past conduct, was warmly exhorted to persevere in the same strict and impartial execution of the laws. In a word, he seemed determined to become a new man, to bury all his juvenile excesses in utter oblivion, and to prove himself the common father and benefactor of all his subjects. And even before his royal predecessor's death, he appears to have been sensible of the folly and impropriety of his conduct, and resolutely bent to reform: For his father being naturally of a jealous and suspicious disposition, listened at times to the suggestions of some of his courtiers, who meanly insinuated, that his son had some evil design upon his crown and authority. These insinuations filled him with the most anxious fears and apprehensions, and he might perhaps have had recourse to very

* See the following Sermon "on Duty to Parents."

disagreeable expedients, to prevent the imaginary danger, had not his suspicions been timely removed by the prudent and exemplary conduct of the young Prince; for, no sooner was he informed of his father's jealousy, than he repaired to court, and throwing himself with all humility and much emotion on his knees, accosted the King in these memorable terms. "I understand, my liege, that you suspect me of entertaining designs against your crown and person: I own I have been guilty of many excesses, which have justly exposed me to your displeasure; but, I take heaven to witness, that I never harboured a single thought, inconsistent with that duty and veneration which I owe to your Majesty. Those who charge me with such criminal intentions, only want to disturb the tranquility of your reign, and basely to alienate your affections from your son and successor. I have therefore taken the liberty to come into your presence; and humbly beg you will cause my conduct to be examined with as much rigour and strictness, as that of the meanest of your subjects; and if I be found guilty, I will cheerfully submit

to any punishment you shall think fit to inflict." The King was so highly satisfied with this prudent and ingenuous address, that he embraced him with great tenderness; acknowledging, that his suspicions were intirely removed; and that, for the future, he would never entertain a thought to the prejudice of his loyalty and honour. See *The Second Part of Shakespear's Henry the Fourth*.

10. Polemo, an Athenian youth, was of so wretched and depraved a cast, that he not only delighted in vice, but gloried in the infamy of it. Returning from a debauch one morning after sun-rise, and seeing the gate of Xenocrates the philosopher open; filled with wine as he was, besmeared with ointments, a garland on his head, and clad in a loose and transparent robe, he enters the school, which at that early hour, was thronged with a number of grave and learned men; and, not content with so indecent an entrance, he sat down among them, on purpose to affront their eloquence and sobriety, and oppose their prudent precepts by his drunken follies. His coming had occasioned all who were present

to be angry, only Xenocrates himself was unmoved; and retaining the same gravity of countenance, and dismissing his present theme of discourse, he began a disquisition on modesty and temperance, which he represented in so lively colours before the young libertine, that Polemo, being much affected, first laid aside the crown from his head, then soon after drew his arm within his cloak; changed the festival merriment that appeared in his face to seriousness and anxiety; and at last, through the whole course of his life, cast off all his luxury and intemperance. Thus, by a single judicious and well adapted oration, the young man received so great a cure, that, from being one of the most licentious of his time, he became one of the greatest philosophers and best men in Athens.

☞ The Reader will meet with great entertainment and instruction, if he refers to Dr. Johnson's sentiments on this subject, in the 65th No. of his *Rambler*.

S E R M O N III.

On Filial Love.

J O H N, xix. 26, 27.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy Son." Then saith he unto the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

IT is the happiness and the perfection of a Christian, to follow his Redeemer's example; an example consummate in every respect, and fraught with instruction to persons of all stations and degrees of life. Children, amongst the rest, may gather from it "Lessons of allegiance and submission to their parents:" And after having shewn in a general view, the "Advantages of Early Piety;" "the Miseries and Fatal Consequences of Early Vice;" I now proceed to dwell upon this first and most important of social offices; proposing to hold forth to You, my young

friends, the admirable instance of tenderness and love presented in the text; * that you may thence be encouraged to honour and requite your parents, and to fulfill a duty which God hath enjoined with peculiar energy, and which rarely, if ever, passes unrewarded even in this world.

Tell me then, doth it not strike you with the most sensible delight to observe the Blessed Saviour of Mankind, when exposed to such infamy, and distressed with such torture; when objects of anguish and of terror only were around Him; when, surely, it might well have been excused, if, attentive solely to his own sorrows, He had forgotten all solicitude for the sorrows of others;—doth it not affect you strongly to behold his tender anxiety for his Blessed Mother, who, in the bitterness of distress, stood weeping at the foot of his cross? One disciple only, one *whom*

* I have rather chosen this Method of treating the Subject, than that of an immediate and didactic form; as so many incomparable Writers have considered it in that way, from whose excellent Compositions all necessary information may be derived. My intentions are principally to arouse and animate to the performance of this amiable Duty.

he loved, and whose perseverance shewed him worthy of that love, continued stedfast to him in his last trials, and forsook him not in the hour of extremity ! To him, to the favoured John, he bequeathed, as his last legacy, the mother, through whose soul the sword of sorrow now pierced ! * “ Woman, said He, best beloved and most honoured of women, in that disciple of mine, *Behold thy Son !* he will supply the place of Him, whose work is finished, and who no longer shall remain on earth to comfort and support thee.” “ And oh thou, whom my soul loveth, faithful friend, and follower of thy master ; *Behold thy mother !* Henceforth receive her, esteem and treat her as thy parent ; and let thy love to me manifest itself by thy affectionate regard to Her !” Pleased with the charge, and happy to execute

* Who can describe (says Mr. Formey, in his discourse on this subject) what then passed in the heart of Mary, and the struggles which she felt within her between faith and nature, justly moved by such a tragic scene ? The expedient of that ancient painter, who veiled the visage of *Agamemnon*, when he assisted at the sacrifice of his Daughter *Iphigenia*, is the only one which can be proper here.—See his *Philosophe Chretien*, Tom. ii. p. 170.

his divine master's command, this disciple, we are told, from that hour took her unto his own home. *

Thus, we see, the pains which our Redeemer sustained, the generous concern which he felt for the world, could not swallow up all his regards of a more private nature. As a man, he felt the sensibility of a Son, and the soft and tender workings of nature within him: As a great and good man, he restrained them within proper bounds, nor suffered them, at that solemn crisis, to break out into any inordinate agitations of grief.

* Antiquity furnishes us with an example of the same kind. A Greek dying in poverty, made two of his friends his heirs; leaving to one the care of his Widow; to the other, that of providing a dowry for his Daughter. These two friends esteemed their legacies as more precious than a considerable sum, and made a point of fulfilling exactly the will of the deceased. If Pagan friendship has produced such an example of generosity, what ought one not to expect from Christian friendship? See Formey as above; where also, from our Saviour's perfect resignation on the cross, from his entire command of his spirit, from his delivering up his Mother into the hands of his disciple St. John, and that disciple's receiving her so readily, he draws a strong argument in behalf of the Christian religion, and plainly proves that neither Jesus nor John could be impostors.

He shewed us, that those affections which nature has implanted, may be innocently cherished, till we are about to pay the last debt of nature; and even then, exert themselves, provided they do not wound the peace of the mind, and shock the soul in her last moments; when she should be as much as possible rid of all the incumbrances of this world, to take her journey with more ease and freedom to another*. Jesus, perfect master of himself, shewed the utmost sensibility, united with the most manly firmness, in providing for his mother on the cross: from which circumstance, it is probable, and generally believed, that Joseph was dead at the time: The Blessed Virgin therefore, as being a widow, stood the more in need of this affectionate care from her Son.

What a pleasing and striking example is this of Filial Love! Doubtless, it was recorded for the instruction of all children; and may we not reasonably believe, that Our Saviour, in his wisdom, thus acted, with a settled design to hold forth the important admonition

* See Seed's Sermons, Vol. i. p. 38.

to all his disciples? For, unquestionably, he who had so tender a regard for his mother, could never have forgotten her, might easily have devolved this care upon St. John, before the time of his crucifixion, which, as we know, he long foresaw: Or, as being himself invested with all power in heaven and earth, he could, without any difficulty, have ministered to all her necessities, and preserved her from every danger. But, willing to set an example of filial tenderness to all mankind, as well as to shew us, that human means are always to be used, even where we have the utmost reason to depend upon the divine providence; to exemplify these great truths, he forgot not, in the hour of anguish, the concerns of his parent, but provided for her with the most affecting tenderness.

And lives there a child, who does not feel the force of this great example, or would not act in imitation of it, upon similar circumstances?—I would hope not. For, if such there be, let them consider in how hateful a light they must appear before their God and Saviour, and in the eyes of all

mankind, who agree to hold in the utmost abhorrence such as are insensible to the obligations of parental care, and ungrateful to those whom God and nature have made their best benefactors ! Of all pleasures, that of returning benefits, and repaying debts of gratitude, is certainly the most exquisite to an ingenuous mind ; and what benefits, what debts can be equal to those which we owe to good parents, for all their kind concern and heart-felt anxiety on our accounts ! If there is a satisfaction more peculiarly divine upon earth, it must be that which we share, when enabled to rejoice the parent's heart, and to shew ourselves sensible of the love we have received, and of the tribute we owe for the innumerable kindnesses which they have conferred.

Indeed, as the foundation of almost all religious, as well as social virtue, is laid in parental and filial love, we therefore find that God hath provided by every method to encourage and keep up this laudable affection. For, not only a strong instinct in the soul, naturally leads to a due performance of this

duty; on either side, an instinct, strong both in parent and child, though for wise and good reasons, more prevalent perhaps in the former: Not only hath God so ordered it, that the human race come into the world more helpless, and continue longer so, than the offspring of any other creatures; by which means the affection is wonderfully cemented on both sides;—the parent's heart being won by the thousand little pleasing endearments of the child, and the child's heart being engaged by the constant recurrence of parental care and love: Not only, I say, hath the great God of nature thus provided for this virtue, by the original constitution of man; but in his sacred revelation, He hath bound upon us this duty by promises the most engaging, and by threats the most formidable.

The first commandment, nay, the only commandment to which he hath annexed any promise, is that which inculcates honour to parents: What stronger proof can we have of the importance and of the advantage of this duty? And on the other side, what stronger proof can we have of the danger of

neglecting it, and of the high detestation of God towards those who neglect it, than the remembrance, that in his law God hath denounced a punishment upon this crime, equal to that of blasphemy against himself? "He that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death!" In agreement wherewith, the wise man remarks, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it!"

In perfect conformity with these passages of scripture, we find that all nations have agreed to honour and esteem those, who honour and esteem their parents; and to hold in abhorrence such as are deficient in this first of all moral duties. The ancient Romans, as well as some other people, carried this matter to a great length: they gave parents the absolute right of life and death over their children: And the Chinese at present, are remarkable for the reverence they exact from children to their parents. Their punishment of parricide if such a thing ever happens, is the most

exemplary and severe. The criminal, in this case, is cut into ten thousand pieces, which are afterwards burned; his houses and lands are destroyed; and even the houses that stood near him; “to remain as monuments of so detested a crime, or rather, that all remembrance of so abominable a villainy may be effaced from the earth!”*

And as such general horror and disapprobation attends the neglect of this duty, so as general a complacency follows upon the due performance. Tell us that a person excels in filial affection; that he is careful and anxious to oblige, bless and assist his parents; and we scarcely ask for any further recommendation. We receive such a one to our immediate esteem: for we scarcely imagine that there can be a bad heart, where this good affection so happily rules. It is the same with historical persons; how much are we pleased with those characters, who have distinguished themselves for this virtue!

* See Du Halde's History of China; and the Modern Universal Hist. Vol. viii. 2vo.

Who beholds not Joseph, for instance, with an eye of greater regard and veneration, when falling down on his knees before his old and afflicted parent, than when he sees him riding in the first chariot of the kingdom, and all the people bending their knees before him. Joseph the Son, is far more respectable even than Joseph the Deliverer of Egypt! Nor is Solomon the wise, and the glorious, ever more glorious and wise, than when he rises up from his throne to meet his mother, bowing himself unto her, and causing her to sit down on his right hand. When Kings set such examples of filial reverence, (and we know there are Kings who set such examples)—let us hope the imitation may become general, to the exquisite comfort and happiness of parents: And surely the voice of ever-dissatisfied censure and malevolence, will not dare to condemn an example, which every virtuous heart must approve and admire.

Very many pleasing instances of filial affection, might easily be produced from sacred and profane history, to shew the general

approbation of this virtue. The Roman daughter, in particular, lives in every one's memory and esteem, who hazarded her life continually to visit her poor aged father in prison; and who, cruelly prevented from bringing that wretched parent food, long supported him, by the milk of her own breast. Happy, happy daughter! thus witnessing her tender affection, and winning to herself an immortal memory in the hearts of all succeeding generations!

From the whole then, you see that Duty to Parents is of the first consequence; and would you, my young friends, recommend yourselves to the favour of your God and father, would you imitate the example of your adorable Redeemer, and be made an inheritor of his precious promises; would you enjoy the peace and comforts of this life, and the good esteem of your fellow-creatures;—Reverence your parents;—and be it your constant endeavour, as it will be your greatest satisfaction, to witness your high sense of, and to make some returns for the obligations you owe to them, by every act of filial obedience and love.

Let their commands be ever sacred in your ears, and implicitly obeyed, where they do not contradict the commands of God: Pretend not to be wiser than they, who have had so much more experience than yourselves; and despise them not, if haply you should be so blest, as to have gained a degree of knowledge or of fortune superior to them. Let your carriage towards them be always respectful, reverent and submissive; let your words be always affectionate and humble, and especially beware of pert, and ill seeming replies; of angry, discontented, and peevish looks. Never imagine, if they thwart your wills, or oppose your inclinations, that this ariseth from any thing but love to you: Solicitous as they have ever been for your welfare, always consider the same tender sollicitude as exerting itself, even in cases most opposite to your desires; And let the remembrance of what they have done and suffered for you, ever preserve you from acts of disobedience, and from paining those good hearts, which have already felt so much for you, their children.

Doubtless, you have all too much ingenuity of temper, to think of repaying the fears and bleeding anxieties they have experienced for your welfare, by deeds of unkindness, which will pierce them to the soul; which perhaps will break the strings of a heart, of which you, and you only, have long had the sole possession!—No, my young friends, so far from this, you will think it the greatest happiness of your lives, to follow your blessed Saviour's example, and to shew the most tender concern for your parents; particularly if, like his, yours should happen to be a widow'd parent; a mother deprived of her chief happiness and stay, by the loss of a husband, for which nothing can compensate but the dutiful and affectionate behaviour of her children: who are bound in that case to manifest double kindness, and to alleviate, by all the tenderness and affection imaginable, the many difficulties and sorrows of widowhood. Those amongst you in such circumstances, will, I persuade myself, think it your greatest delight to excell in every office of Filial Love; you will rejoice to testify by all means in your power that love to them, to whom,

under God, you owe all blessings, and to whom, as the givers of your being, and of your well-being, of your education, religion, subsistence, you owe more than can ever be paid. * Happy you, who can make some return! happiest they, who can make the greatest! for the pleasure of doing so, is the most divine and exquisite which this world can give, or to be equalled only by that which the joyful parent shares, in the pleasing reception of so acceptable a tribute!

And let parents never forget, that much, very much of this happiness is in their own power; that it depends upon themselves, and their early cultivation of their childrens minds: an important truth, which can never be too much enforced. If parents, actuated only by the strong impulse of natural love, use not those endeavours to cultivate the young mind, which are absolutely necessary; if blind fondness, ever fatal, prevents them from plucking up those evil weeds

* "Parentes carissimos habere debemus, quod ab iis nobis vita, matrimonium, libertas, civitas tradita est," Cic. post Red. in Sen. N. 2.

which easily shew themselves in the human heart, and which, suffered to grow up, will choak the seed of every better plant; they must not wonder if their children afterwards prove head-strong, self-willed, disobedient, and tear their hapless hearts with anguish, instead of soothing them with all the comforts of filial love. Wise are those parents, who early inure their children to discipline, early tincture their young minds with the knowledge of religion, and the love of virtue, and early lead their young feet into that blessed peaceful path, which once trod, and well known, they will find too delightful ever to forsake.

And great cause there is to do so, on every account; not only for their own, not only for their children's happiness in this world, but more especially for their happiness in the next; to which they perhaps may be called much earlier than expected;—may be cut down, lovely flowers, even in their bloom! And then how unpleasing a reflection, that they have been taught little of God, and of their Saviour, while every attention has

been given to instruct them in the discipline of this world! Let that thought dwell upon your minds, and induce you (my young friends) to seek the Lord in your youth; that, if he should give you an early summons to his kingdom, you may be found ready and ripe for it; or if not, may, by the advantages of an early piety, advance to greater perfection, and enjoy life with superior comfort.

Too apt, alas! are we all, in the full vigour of life, to forget that we may be cut down as the grass, and wither as a green herb! But melancholy instances are sometimes presented before our view, to teach us this knowledge, and to shew us that impartial-death pays no respect to youth or bloom, but levels these with as much unconcern as he levels age and infirmities!—How affecting the case which hath led me to these reflections!—A young man, amiable in his person, engaging in his manners, conscientious and exact in his duties, just blooming into life, the only son of his afflicted parents, in a moment,

cut down and corrupting in the dust!—Who, but must feel for those parents, encompassed with severest distress? who but must feel the self-convicting thought, that no age is secure or exempt from the stroke of death;—that stroke, which from this world conveys us to the presence of almighty God, and where our faithful discharge of duty below, will, through Christ, undoubtedly admit us to the fullness of bliss: A thought which must awaken in every parent's heart an anxious concern for the spiritual instruction of their children, and in the heart of every child, a steady resolution to honour and obey their parents, that so God may finally approve and bless them with length of days, even an eternity of days, in the land of rest and peace. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES, recommending Filial Love.

I. As some Christian captives at Algiers, who had been ransomed, were going to be discharged, the cruizers brought in a Swedish vessel, among the crew of which was the father of one of those ransomed captives.

The son soon made himself known to the old man, but their unhappiness to meet in such a place, as may well be conceived, was grievous to both. The young man, however, considering that the slavery his father was about to undergo, would inevitably put an end to his life, requested that he might be released, and himself detained in his room ; which was immediately granted. But when the story was told to the governor, he was so affected with it, that he caused the son likewise to be discharged, as the reward of his filial and exemplary tenderness.

2. One of the favourites of King Henry the Fifth, when Prince of Wales, having been indicted for some misdemeanour, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest the Prince could make in his favour ; inso-much, that he was so incensed at the issue of the trial, as to strike the judge on the bench. This magistrate, whose name was Sir William Gascoigne, acted with a spirit becoming his character : He instantly ordered the Prince to be committed to prison ; and young Henry, by this time sensible of the

insult he had offered to the laws of his country, suffered himself to be quietly conducted to gaol, by the officers of justice. The King (Henry the Fourth) who was an excellent judge of mankind, was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he cried out in a transport of joy, " Happy is the King, who has a Magistrate possessed of courage to execute the laws ; and still more happy, in having a Son who will submit to such chastisement !" See p. 58.

3. Boleslaus the fourth, King of Poland, had a picture of his father, which he carried about his neck, set in a plate of gold ; and when he was going to speak, or do any thing of importance, he took this pleasing monitor in his hand, and kissing it, used to say, " My dear father, may I do nothing remissly, or unworthy of thy name !"

4. Among the incredible number of persons who were proscribed under the second triumvirate of Rome, were the celebrated orator Cicero, and his brother Quintus. When the news of this proscription was

brought to them, they endeavoured to make their escape to Brutus, in Macedon. They travelled together for some time, mutually condoling their bad fortune: But as their departure had been very precipitate, and they were not furnished with money and other necessaries for the voyage, it was agreed that Cicero should make what haste he could to the sea-side to secure their passage; and that Quintus should return home to make more ample provision. But, as in most houses there were as many informers as domesticks, his return was immediately known, and the house in consequence filled with soldiers and assassins. Quintus concealed himself so effectually, that the soldiers could not find him. Enraged at their disappointment, they put his son to the torture, in order to make him discover the place of his father's concealment; but filial affection was proof in this young Roman against the most exquisite torments. An involuntary sigh, and sometimes a deep groan, was all that could be extorted from the generous youth. His agonies were increased; but, with amazing fortitude, he still persisted in his

resolution not to betray his father. Quintus was not far off; and it may better be imagined, than can be expressed, how the heart of a father must have been affected with the sighs and groans of a son expiring in torture, to save *his* life. He could bear it no longer; but quitting the place of his concealment, presented himself to the assassins, beseeching them with a flood of tears to put *him* to death, and dismiss the innocent child; whose generous behaviour the triumvirs themselves, if informed of the fact, would judge worthy of the highest approbation and reward. But the inhuman monsters, without being in the least touched by the tears either of the father or the son, answered, that they both must die; the father, because he was proscribed; and the son, because he had concealed his father. Upon this, a new contest of tenderness arose, who should die the first; which however, the assassins soon decided, by beheading them both at the same time.

5. Solon the Spartan legislator, never would establish any law against parricides, or pa-

rent-killers, saying, "The Gods forbid that a monster should ever come into our commonwealth!" and it is certain that upwards of two centuries elapsed, from the first building Rome, before so much as the name of parricide was known amongst them. The first who killed his own father, and stained his hands in the blood of him who gave him life, was Lucius Otfius, a person afterwards detested throughout all ages; and P. Malleolus, as Livy informs us, was the first among the Romans who was known to have killed his mother; and who underwent that punishment, which the ancients instituted in so atrocious a circumstance. For they ordained, that the parricide should be first scourged in the severest manner; then sewed up in a sack, together with a cock, a viper, a dog and an ape, and so thrown headlong into the sea.

6. The Emperor of China on certain days of the year pays a visit to his mother, who is seated on a throne to receive him; and four times on his feet, and as often on his knees, he makes her a profound obeisance, bowing

his head even to the ground. The same custom is also observed through the greatest part of the empire; and if it appears that any one is negligent or deficient in his duty to his parents, he is liable to a complaint before the magistrates, who punish such offenders with much severity. This however is seldom the case; no people, in general, expressing more filial respect and duty than they. See Modern Universal Hist. Vol. 8.

7. Sir Thomas More seems to have emulated this beautiful example; for, being Lord Chancellor of England at the same time that his father was a Judge of the King's bench, he would always, on his entering Westminster Hall, go first to the King's bench, and ask his father's blessing, before he went to sit in the Court of Chancery; as if to secure success in the great decisions of his high and important office.

8. During an eruption of mount *Ætna* many years since, the danger it occasioned to the inhabitants of the adjacent country became very imminent, and the flames flying

about, they were obliged to retire to a greater distance. Amidst the hurry and confusion of such a scene, (every one flying and carrying away whatever they deemed most precious) two sons, the one named Anapias, the other Amphinomus, in the height of their solicitude for the preservation of their wealth and goods, recollected their father and mother, who, being both very old, were unable to save themselves by flight. Filial tenderness set aside every other consideration; and, "Where," cried the generous youths, "shall we find a more precious treasure, than those who begat and gave us being?" This said, the one took up his father on his shoulders, the other his mother, and so made their way through the surrounding smoke and flames. The fact struck all beholders with the highest admiration; and they and their posterity ever after called the path they took in their retreat, "The field of the Pious," in memory of this pleasing accident.

9. A woman of distinction in Rome had been condemned to a capital punishment: The prætor accordingly delivered her up to

the triumvir, who caused her to be carried to prison, in order to be put to death. The gaoler, who had orders to execute her, was moved with compassion, and could not resolve to kill her: He determined therefore to let her die of hunger; besides which, he suffered her daughter to see her in prison, taking care however to have her diligently examined, lest she might bring her sustenance. As this continued many days, he was surprized that the prisoner lived so long without eating; and, suspecting the daughter, upon watching her, he discovered that (like the famous Xantippe, daughter of Cimon) she nourished her parent with the milk of her own breasts. Amazed at so pious, and at the same time so ingenious a procedure, he ventured to tell the fact to the triumvir, and the triumvir to the prætor; who thought the circumstance worthy of being related in the assembly of the people. The criminal was pardoned: A decree passed, that the mother and daughter should be subsisted for the residue of their lives, at the expence of the publick; and, to crown the whole, that a temple "Sacred to Piety," should be erected near the prison.

10. Epaminondas the Theban general, being asked "what was the most pleasing event that had happened to him in his whole life;" chearfully answered, "It was this, that he had obtained that glorious victory over the Leuctrians, at a time when his father and mother were both living to enjoy the news."

11. While Octavius was at Samos, after the famous battle of Actium, which made him master of the universe, he held a council, in order to examine the prisoners who had been engaged in Anthony's party. Among the rest, there was brought before him Metellus, an old man, oppressed with years and infirmities, disfigured by a long beard and dishevelled hair, but especially by his cloaths, which, through his ill fortune, were become very ragged. The son of this Metellus, sat as one of the Judges, and at first could not easily discriminate his father, through this deplorable appearance: At length, however, after viewing him narrowly, having recollected his features, instead of being ashamed to own him, he ran to

embrace the old man, and cried bitterly. Then, returning toward the tribunal, "Cæsar, said he, my father has been your enemy, I your officer: He deserves to be punished, and I to be rewarded. The favour I desire of you is, either to save him on my account, or to order me to be put to death with him." All the judges were touched with commiseration at this affecting scene; and Octavius himself relenting, granted to old Metellus his life and liberty.

12. Darius invaded Scythia with all the forces of his empire: The Scythians retired by little and little, till they came at length to the uttermost desarts of Asia. Here Darius sent his ambassador to them, to demand where it was they proposed to conclude their retreat, and when they intended to begin fighting. They returned him for answer, with the spirit so peculiar to that nation, "That they had no cities, nor cultivated fields, for the defence of which they should give him battle; but when once he was come to the place of their fathers monuments, he should then understand in what

manner the Scythians used to fight:" So great a reverence had even that barbarous nation for the ashes of their ancestors !

13. The Emperor Decimus, intending and desiring to place the crown on the head of Decius his son, the young Prince refused it in the most strenuous manner ; saying, " I am afraid, lest, being made an Emperor, I should forget that I am a Son. I had rather be no Emperor, and a dutiful son, than an Emperor, and such a son as hath forsaken his due obedience. Let then my father bear the rule ; and let this only be MY empire,—to obey with all humility, and to fulfil whatsoever he shall command me." Thus the solemnity was waved, and the young man was not crowned ; unless mankind shall say, that this signal piety towards an indulgent parent, was a more glorious diadem to the son, than that which consisted merely of gold and jewels.

S E R M O N IV.

On Fraternal Love.

J O H N xi. 5.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

IT has been always allowed, that the cultivation of young minds is of the utmost importance; not only because the happiness of states greatly depends on the virtue and abilities of the rising generation; but because mens felicity in future life, is immediately connected with the improvements and advantages they receive in youth. It therefore greatly concerns not only parents, but all those who are entrusted with the instruction of youth, to be more than ordinarily solicitous, so to form and embellish their minds, as to give them a probable hope of enjoying themselves, as well as of becoming useful members in society, when called forth to fill up their places on the stage of life.

Strongly impressed with this idea, and very fully convinced of its weight and truth, I have often, during the course of my preaching, addressed myself occasionally, my younger hearers, to you ; wishing to gain your hearts, and to engage them early in a service, whose rewards are sure, and inexpressibly great. But, desirous still further to promote this good end, and demonstrate my sincere solicitude for your best welfare, I resolved, by God's assistance, to lay before you a series of discourses, calculated more especially for the instruction of those of my own sex.— Having therefore enlarged, with this view, on the striking Advantages of Early Piety, on the deplorable Consequences of vicious and bad Habits in Youth, and also on that first and indispensable Duty of Love and Reverence to Parents ; I now proceed to recommend, as next in order and importance, the Duty of Fraternal Love ; a duty not less enforced by nature, than by religion, and by every consideration of present advantage and comfort.

1. Next to filial love, it is certainly one of the most natural propensities of the human heart. The great and wise Creator, who established the present mode of being, has certainly implanted and interwoven in the very texture of the soul, all those tender and amiable charities, which are so pleasing in themselves, while they are indispensably necessary to the being and good order of society. And he has so directed the mode of living, at our entrance upon existence, that every thing is calculated to improve and strengthen these natural tendencies. Born of the same parents, brothers and sisters hang at the same fond breast, and drink the same milk; fed beneath the same roof, they share the same united and tender cares, the same ideas are impressed, and they are taught to regard each other as cemented by ties of the most endearing and indissoluble sort. No wonder hence, that a mutual and increasing prepossession for each other gains upon the heart; while custom unites with nature, and both are strengthened by parental wisdom and solicitude. Where that wisdom and solicitude are properly exerted, Fraternal Love is

seldom wanting: its deficiency, for the most part, must be attributed either to the parent's carelessness and neglect to cultivate it; or to an evil, which all wise parents will most carefully avoid; a partial fondness shewn to one, in neglect of other children.

'Tis undoubted, that some children from nature inherit qualities, which render them more amiable and engaging than others, and there are circumstances in life which naturally lead to prejudices in favour of peculiar children. But, whatever the parental heart may feel, it will always exert the most cautious endeavours to conceal any such partialities; well assured that they are not only blameable in themselves, but very frequently the cause of breaking that golden cord of paternal affection, which should always be kept most sacredly united, and which no jealousies should be allowed to dissolve or disturb. Without these, nature rightly encouraged, and parents duly improving the affection, fraternal love, for the most part, will reign amongst children; for it is agreeable to nature, and all the right tendencies of nature

will undoubtedly operate as they are designed, if not disturbed in their regular course, if properly directed and aided by the wise hand of prudence and experience.

2. And such prudence and experience will always apply to religion more especially, for this aid and direction: * For the religion of Jesus Christ, amongst a thousand characteristics of its excellence, has this peculiar recommendation, that it coincides with, and beautifully enforces all the finest feelings of nature. Indeed, its highest and most distinguishing doctrine,—that, I mean, of universal love, is founded upon that fraternal relation, in which all men stand to each other. Children of the great father of the universe, we are called “to love as brethren.” Brotherly affection therefore is not only expected in the professors of this religion, but is the best foundation for the attainment of its per-

* “Though there are numberless other motives (says a worthy father, writing to his son) to incite [Fraternal Love] that natural tendency of a good heart; yet, were there no other, its being pleasing to the Almighty, is a sufficient inducement for its cultivation in every worthy breast.”

fection, and consequently, most acceptable in the sight of God.

We have a pleasing proof how estimable it was in the sight of our adorable Redeemer, from the friendship wherewith he honoured Lazarus and his sisters. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus:" no doubt, because this happy family excelled in fraternal and sisterly affection, and, truly loving each other, were worthy of the love of Jesus. That they excelled in this affection, is sufficiently evident from that anxiety which the sisters shewed, when their worthy and much-valued brother lay dangerously sick; and they sent that importunate and affecting message to their friend; "Lord I behold He whom thou lovest is sick." Happy Lazarus, blessed with such sisters! Happy sisters, blessed with a brother so worthy your tenderest esteem! Happy family, whose united affection was crowned with such friendship as that of the Saviour of the World! Oh, my young friends! feel you not in your hearts a laudable envy of this favoured family? an earnest emulation to be loved like them? Be-

lieve me, that emulation need not be in vain. 'Tis with yourselves to be blest and to be favoured no less than Lazarus and his sisters: Love one another as they loved; be as cordially solicitous for each other's best welfare; and rest confidently assured, that Jesus will love you, as he did Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

3. That fraternal love is agreeable to nature, and well-pleasing to God, should certainly be its sufficient recommendation; but, besides this, it is productive of many advantages, and attended with many comforts. "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" That family can scarcely fail of fortune and felicity, who, brought up together in love, are early taught to consider each other's interests as one, and continue through life mutually to serve and assist each other. Hence it is, that we frequently find those parents most singularly blest in their families, who, having had the largest number of children, have made it their first and latest care to unite those children in the bonds of brotherly

love. Human policy, every consideration incites to this care. For, as brothers are to each other the best and most faithful of friends; * so are they, when disunited, too often the most bitter and prejudicial of enemies: and that house can scarcely expect much worldly success or advancement, where jarring interests and jarring sentiments separate those who ought to be chief friends.

The ancients, my young friends, conveyed much of their instruction in fables. And there is one, which perhaps you may know, but which well deserves to be repeated, as it is not only applicable to our present subject, but very instructive in itself. A tender father, on his death-bed, called his children around him, and presenting them with a small bundle of twigs, ordered them to try, one after another, with all their force if they could break it. They tried, but could not; "Unbind it now, said he, and take every

* *Quis amior, quam frater fratri? aut quem alienum fidum invenies, si tuis hostis fueris? &c.* See the speech of Micipsa to Jugurtha, in Sallust. Jugurth. Bell. p. 247. Edit. Wasse.

twig of it separately, and see what you can do by that means." They did so, and with great ease, one by one, they broke it all to pieces. " Behold, said he, my dear children, the true emblem of your condition. Keep together, and you will be safe, unhurt, and prosperous. Divide, and you are certainly undone."

4. But the advantages of Fraternal Love, however great, are not comparable to the comforts and honours which it brings. For all the advantages in the world, could they be attained, become but splendid miseries, when the mind is harrassed and distressed, and the bosom torn with the chagrin of uneasy passions. And what chagrin, what uneasiness can be more painful, than that which arises from domestick quarrels and divisions; when brother is set against brother, and the house, divided against itself, totters to its fall!

The abuse of the best things is always the worst. It is eminently the case with fraternal affection: Fraternal hatred is even prover-

bial for the bitterest hatred ; and who knows not how devoid of comfort that heart must be, where such hatred rankles and boils !

On the contrary, what inexpressible delight, when brothers and sisters of one family live together in all the harmony of friendship and good esteem ! mutually delighted and charmed with each other's presence and society !—Peace dwells in their bosom, and transport beats at their heart. They know how to alleviate each other's troubles and difficulties ; they know how to impart and double each other's felicity and pleasure. And if, perchance, their aged parents live, who have formed them thus to love ; whose early care provided for them this high feast of the most delicate sensations ; what increasing raptures do they feel, from blessing those parents with this fruit of their care ! O ye happy parents, if I could envy any beings upon earth, it were You ; who see your youth renewed in good and worthy children flourishing around you ; who see those children amply crowning your days and nights of past sollicitude, not only with the most reverential respect to yourselves,

but, with what you wish still more, if possible, with the firmest and most respectful love to each other! Who see those children, with all the kindness of that love you fought to inspire, like olive branches verdant around you; blessed in you, blessed in each other, blessed in themselves; the providence of God smiling upon them; success and honour attending their steps. Happy parents! your's is a chosen lot. Happy parents! who from the moment they become such, exert their utmost efforts to attain that lot, and to strengthen by the bonds of religion and instruction, what nature so kindly implants, and will aid so much in the rearing.

5. I said that success and honour accompany those who excel in Fraternal Love: They will not only feel the most pleasing comfort which the human heart can enjoy; they will not only have the greatest probability of worldly success; but they will certainly find that, which is indeed one great means of worldly advancement; they will find real honour attending them: They will obtain all the advantages which accompany good reputation.

I dare appeal to the sentiments of any man living upon this occasion. You involuntarily and immediately conceive a good opinion of that young person, who distinguishes himself for his Fraternal and Filial Love. I join both, because I conceive they can never be separated. He who loves his brethren and sisters, will unquestionably love his parents; as he who loves his christian brother, will assuredly love his Father in heaven. Let a person be recommended to you as excelling in this affection; as remarkable for his tenderness and attachment to his family; Your heart will instantly bear testimony to him; you will esteem and honour him. Contemplate a whole family, eminent for their union and affection to each other: See the brothers dutiful to their parents; kind and respectful to their sisters; solicitous for, and serving each other;—You cannot help admiring them; you are sure there is virtue and goodness amongst them; you think, you speak of them with pleasure, and would, certainly, in worldly matters, prefer, where possible, connections with them. This is the language of nature, of feeling; 'tis universal, and therefore just.

But say, my young friends ! Can an argument more forcible be urged for your cultivation of brotherly love ; which will thus gain you the involuntary, and consequently the best homage of your fellow-creatures ; which will be at all times a patron to recommend, and an advocate to plead your cause in every honest breast ? Great and many are the advantages of good reputation, that jewel of inestimable price,—as perhaps may hereafter be shewn : Nor can you be too anxious to gain it, or too chary of it when gained. But take it from me, as an undoubted truth, nothing will tend so much to secure it, as a regard to that virtue we are enforcing ; as a tender and unwearied love of your brothers, a love founded in the heart, and exerting itself in every friendly and fraternal action ; as a solicitous endeavour to guard the honour, to defend the rights, to promote the happiness of those sisters, who have a greater, a more affecting claim upon your love, as being by providence ordained more defenceless, to bless you with the exquisite honour and happiness of protecting them.

Tenderer as they are by nature, and perhaps more susceptible of the gentler affections, it is their frequent praise to excell greatly in this laudable attachment: And we see in the case of Lazarus before us, what good sisters can do for their brother:—They can call in Jesus to his aid. By their piety and their prayers they can often obtain the best blessings from heaven, and by the purity and engaging mildness of their behaviour, may win a brother, and raise him from the death of sin to the life of righteousness and virtue. This, at least, should be the endeavour of those, who see their brothers deviating from the paths of truth and virtue.—For such as happily and unitedly walk together in those paths; for such as are anxious to communicate good to each other; spiritual good, more especially; (like Andrew, no sooner finding the Messiah themselves, than hastening to inform their own brother Simon, * and zealous to impart all the happiness they themselves receive;) For such, I can find no words strong enough to felicitate their choice! —You are acting agreeably to the best dictates

* John i. 40.

of nature, conformably to the will and highest approbation of your God and Redeemer: Your conduct is formed upon the best principles of wisdom; like Godliness, "it is not only profitable for the world to come, but for this world also;" it is the surest road to success; the likeliest means to procure you all the advantages of this life: Peace of mind, and the highest delights which the soul can relish, will be your internal comfort; and you may be infallibly assured of the good esteem and respect of all those, who are worthy your esteem: the virtuous and the good, will admire and applaud you.

Need I, my young friends, offer any other arguments towards the cultivation of this virtuous affection? Which would you rather be?—ask your own hearts,—a Cain, stigmatized by the hand of God himself for fraternal hatred; driven from society, an outcast and a vagabond, unnatural, irreligious, uncomfortable, despised, hated: or a Joseph, melting with Fraternal Love; forgiving every injury; blessing with prosperity all his House; weeping over the necks of recovered brethren,

bowing the affectionate knee to an ancient and venerable parent; virtuous, fearing God, abounding in plenty, in comfort, in glory? O! where is the heart that feels not the contrast? Yes, my young friends, while you shrink with horror from the fratricide of a Cain, you envy the life and salvation restored by the affection of a Joseph.

Be it yours, like him, to cultivate in your hearts that fear of God, which so remarkably sustained him amidst all his trials and temptations; which preserved him from defiling his master's bed, which preserved him from avenging himself on cruel and unworthy brothers; (for even a Joseph had cruel and unworthy brethren) which, far from vengeance, inspired him with the most amiable disposition to forgive;—and not to forgive only, but to succour and to save! And thus to melt them to his love, by heaping coals of kindness on their heads.

Yes, it is the fear of God only which can give stability to this, as to every other virtue. Let parents then, whose hearts

nearest wish it is, to see their children dwell together in unity, let them early cultivate in their children that divine religion, whose blessed precepts so nobly enforce the duty of Fraternal Love. Wise are those parents, and happy will they find themselves, who, void of all simple prejudices, who never indulging to any ill-grounded partialities, labour to the utmost of their power to inculcate, from the earliest moment, the knowledge and the love of God on their children's hearts; who teach them that they have all one father, even God, and are bound, if they would please him, to love as brethren; (a duty so sweet, so beneficial and comfortable, that one would wonder there should ever have been need to command it, had we not a much more striking cause of wonder, in observing how little it is fulfilled;) Who teach their children, by every mild and gentle method to unite in reciprocal offices of love; pointing out to them the advantages, causing them to feel the comforts, to share the honours, and by every possible method impressing upon them the necessity, of this close and dear union, to all their best interests both

here and hereafter. Proceed with courage, ye worthy and affectionate parents, in this method ; early and late implore the blessing of heaven on your best endeavours ; and rest assured, that your children will rise up to bless you, and prove a crown of glory to your hoary heads. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES, enforcing Fraternal Love.

1. Scylurus the Scythian, having fourscore sons, desired nothing so much as to bring them up in the love of each other : and, to shew them how invincible such a concord would render them, as he lay on his death-bed, he called them around him, and giving to each of them a bundle of javelins, bade them try if they could break the bundles. The young men, having attempted, and declaring it impracticable, Scylurus untied the bundles in their presence, broke the javelins one by one, with the greatest ease, and from thence took occasion thus to address his children, “ Behold, my sons, your strength, whilst linked together in the bonds of amity ; On the contrary, how weak, and what an easy prey you must be, when separated in

S E R M O N I V. 111

your interests by discords and sedition." See page 100.

2. As one of the water-bearers at the fountain of the Fauxbourgs St. Germain in Paris, was at his usual labours in August 1766, he was taken away by a gentleman in a splendid coach, who proved to be his own brother, and who, at the age of three years, had been carried to India, where he made a considerable fortune. On his return to France he had made inquiry respecting his family; and hearing that he had only one brother alive, and he in this humble condition of a water-bearer, he sought him out, embraced him with great affection, and brought him to his house; where he gave him bills for upwards of a thousand crowns per annum.

3. The learned and pious Bishop Hall tells us, in his "Specialities," that instead of being sent to the university when a boy, he was very near being placed for education under a private tutor at Leicester: But his eldest brother having occasion to go to Cambridge about this time, and waiting

upon a Fellow of Emanuel College, the latter, on hearing of the diversion of old Mr. Hall's former purposes from the university, importunately dissuaded him from that new course, professing to pity the loss of such good hopes. The elder brother, moved with these words, on his return home, fell upon his knees to his father, and besought him to alter so prejudicial a resolution, and not suffer the young man's hopes to be drowned in a shallow country channel, but revive his first intentions for Cambridge; adding, in the zeal of his affection, that if the chargeableness of that course were the hindrance, he should be rather pleased to sell part of that land, which, in the order of nature, he was to inherit, than to abridge his brother of so happy a mean to perfect his education." This very uncommon and amiable instance of generosity had its due effect; and the world sufficiently knows the success and blessing which attended it, through the excellent labours of this eloquent and devout prelate.

4. The father of that eminent lawyer Mr. Serjeant Glanvill had a good estate, which

he intended to settle on his elder son; but he proving a vicious young man, and there being no hopes of his recovery, he devolved it upon the Serjeant, who was his second son. Upon the father's death, the eldest, finding that what he had before considered as the mere threatenings of an angry old man, were now but too certain, became melancholy, which by degrees wrought in him so great a change, that what his father could not prevail in while he lived, was now effected by the severity of his last will. His brother observing this, called him with many of his friends together to a feast; where, after other dishes had been served up, he ordered one, which was covered, to be set before his brother, and desired him to uncover it; upon his doing which, the company, no less than himself, were surprised to find it full of writings, and still more, when the Serjeant told them "that he was now doing what he was sure his father would have done, had he lived to see that happy change which they now all saw in his brother; and therefore he freely restored to him the whole estate."

5. In the year 1585, the Portuguese Car-racks sailed from Lisbon to Goa, a very rich and flourishing colony of that nation in the East Indies. On board of one of these vessels, there were no less than 1200 souls, mariners, passengers, priests, and friars: The beginning of their voyage was prosperous, but not many days after, through the perverseness of the pilot, the ship struck on a rock, and instant death began to stare them in the face. In this distress, the captain ordered the pinnace to be launched, into which having tossed a small quantity of biscuit, and some boxes of marmalade, he jumped in himself with 19 others, who with their swords prevented the coming of any more, lest the boat should sink. Thus scantily equipped, they put off into the great Indian ocean, without a compass to steer by, or any fresh water, but what might happen to fall from the heavens, whose mercy alone could deliver them. At the end of 4 or 5 days, the captain died with sickness, and they were obliged, to prevent confusion, to elect one of their company to command them. This person proposed to them to draw lots, and

SERMON IV. 115

cast every 4th man over-board; their small stock of provision being now so far spent, as not to be able, at very short allowance, to sustain life above three days longer. To this they agreed, so that there were 4 to die out of their unhappy number, the captain, a friar, and a carpenter being exempted by general consent. The lots being cast, three of the first submitted to their fate, after they had confessed and received absolution. The 4th victim was a Portuguese gentleman, that had a younger brother in the boat; who, seeing him about to be thrown over-board, most tenderly embraced him, and with tears besought him to let him die in his room; enforcing his arguments by telling him, "that he was a married man, and had a wife and children at Goa, besides the care of three sisters, who absolutely depended upon him for support; whereas himself was single, and his life of no great importance:" He therefore conjured him to suffer him to supply his place; assuring him that he had rather die for him, than live without him. The elder brother, astonished, and melting with his

generosity, replied, " that since the divine providence had appointed him to suffer, it would be wicked and unjust to permit any other to die for him, but especially a brother to whom he was so infinitely obliged." The younger, however, persisting in his refusal, would take no denial; but throwing himself on his knees, held his brother so fast, that the company could not disengage him. Thus they disputed a while; the elder bidding him be a father to his children, and recommending his wife and sisters to his protection; but all he could say could not make the younger desist. This was a scene of tenderness that must fill every humane breast with pity: At last the constancy of the elder brother yielded to the piety of the other, and suffered the gallant youth to supply his stead; who being cast into the sea, and a good swimmer, soon got to the stern of the pinnace, and laid hold of the rudder with his right hand. This being perceived by one of the sailors, he cut off the hand with his sword; then dropping into the sea, he presently regained his hold with his left hand, which received the same fate by a second

blow. Thus dismembered of both hands, he made a shift notwithstanding to keep himself above water with his feet and two stumps, which he held bleeding upwards. This moving spectacle so stung the pity of the whole company, that they cried out, "he is but one man; let us endeavour to save him!" Accordingly, he was taken into the boat, where he had his hands bound up as well as the place and circumstances would admit. They then continued rowing all night; and the next morning, when the sun arose (as if heaven would reward the gallantry and piety of this young man) they descried land; which proved to be the mountains of Mozambique, in Africa, not far from a Portuguese colony: Thither they all safe arrived, where they remained till the next ship from Lisbon passed by, and carried them to Goa. At that city, Linschoten, a writer of good credit, assures us he himself saw them land, supped with the two brothers that very night, beheld the younger with his stumps, and had the story from their own mouths. See *his Voyages.*

6. Titus, the Roman Emperor, who was called for his virtues "the delight of mankind," bore such a brotherly affection toward Domitian, that though he knew he had spoken irreverently of him, and had solicited the army to rebellion; yet he never treated him with the less love or respect, even on that account, nor would suffer others to do so; but called him his partner and successor in the empire, and sometimes, when they were alone together, he besought him not only with earnest intreaties, but with tears, that he would bear the same brotherly love towards Him, as he always had, and should ever find from him.

7. During the heavy war with Antiochus, the province of Asia fell to the lot of Lucius the brother of Scipio Africanus; but the Senate, not thinking his abilities adequate to the charge, seemed inclinable rather to commit the conduct of the war to Caius Lælius his colleague, with whom his brother Africanus was in the most intimate friendship. But no sooner had the latter heard of their deliberation, than he earnestly besought the senate not to transfer the province, though

it were to Lælius himself, which had fallen by lot to his brother; promising at the same time that he would accompany Lucius into Asia, and serve with him in quality of his legate. Thus the elder brother fostered and supported the younger; the valiant defended the weak; and so aided him with his counsel, that at length Lucius returned to his country triumphant, and was crowned with the glorious surname of Scipio Asiaticus.

8. Henry, King of Arragon and Sicily, left at his death his only son John, a child of two and twenty months old, whom he entrusted to the care and fidelity of his brother Ferdinand. This Prince was a man of great virtue and merit, and therefore the eyes of the nobles and people were fixed upon him; and not only in private discourses, but in the publick assemblies, he had the general voice and consent to be chosen King of Arragon. With unshaken magnanimity however he remained deaf to these offers; alledged and asserted the right of his infant nephew, and the custom of the country, together

with his dying brother's last will, " which, said he, you are bound the rather to maintain, by how much the more incapable the young Prince is to do it." His words, notwithstanding, had not the effect he wished, and the assembly adjourned for that day: Soon after they met again, in hopes that having had time to consider of it, he would now accept their suffrages. Ferdinand apprized of their purpose, prepared himself for their reception, caused the little child to be clothed in royal robes, and having hid him under his garments, went and took his seat in the assembly: Upon which the master of the horse, by order of the States, coming up and asking him, " Whom, O Ferdinand, is it your pleasure to have declared our King?" The generous Prince, with a sharp look and solemn tone, replied, " Whom, but John, the son of our brother?"—Having said this, he immediately took the infant from under his robe, and lifting him upon his shoulders, with a loud voice cried, " God save King John!" Then setting down the child, and commanding the royal banners to be displayed, he cast himself first to the

ground before him ; and all the rest, moved by his illustrious example, did the like.

9. Timoleon the Corinthian is a noble pattern of Fraternal Love ; for being in a battle with the Argives, and seeing his brother fall down dead with the wounds he had received, he instantly leaped over his dead body, and with his shield protected it from insult and plunder ; and though forely wounded in this generous enterprize, he would not by any means retreat to a place of safety, till such time as he had seen the corpse carried off the field by his friends.—How happy for Christians, would they imitate this Heathen, and as tenderly screen from abuse and calumny the wounded Reputation or dying Honour, of an absent or defenceless brother !

10. During the whole third general persecution of the Christians, under the Emperor Trajan, in the year of Christ one hundred, the holy Evangelist St. John felt none of the storm at Ephesus, where he resided ; but pursued his duty in peace, though extremely

weak and declining, being then near an hundred years of age. He continually, in his preaching, urged his auditors to the great duties of love and tenderness for each other; and our Lord's great love to him, seems to have inspired his soul with a more extensive and generous affection than was common to the rest of mankind. St. Jerome tells us that by reason of his great age, he was reduced to such weakness, as to be unable to go to the church, or Christian assemblies, unless carried by his disciples; and that not being able to make long discourses, he urged little more in those assemblies than this sentence, "My dear children, love one another." Those who heard him, being at length weary with this constant repetition of the same injunction, said to him, "Master, why do you always say the same thing?" To which he returned them this answer, worthy of the beloved apostle: "It is what our Lord himself has commanded; and if we can perform this, we need do nothing more." Thus we see love is not only the fulfilling of the Law, but the perfection of the Gospel too. See page 97.

S E R M O N V.

Application to Wisdom and Learning
recommended and enforced.

PROVERBS iv. 7, 8, 9.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding.—Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.—She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

AN early and diligent application to Learning and Wisdom, is the next duty we would wish to enforce upon young persons. SOLOMON, whose extraordinary praise it is, that he was the wisest of the sons of men, not only in the text, but in various other parts of this book, commends Wisdom as “the principal thing;” and speaks of her in the highest terms, as most useful, comfortable, and honourable to mankind: Nor can any words be stronger than those he uses, to

recommend the acquisition of this valuable Wisdom: "Wisdom is the principal thing, &c."

Solomon is not peculiar in his opinion: All those, in every age, who have been most familiar with Wisdom; who have been blessed with the largest and most comprehensive understanding, have united their voice with him; have with one consent declared, "That Wisdom is the principal thing; that happy is the man who attaineth her; that she is more precious than rubies; and all that we can desire is not to be compared unto her."

Nor will you hesitate to unite in the same opinion, when you are shewn, First, what is meant by this Wisdom; Secondly, what are its properties and effects: A due sense of which will, I hope, be sufficient, not only to awaken in all your hearts a love of wisdom, but a serious application in youth, to the knowledge and acquisition of it; an acquisition, to which, as I will shew, you are stimulated by every motive of duty to your God; to your parents; to society; to yourselves.

I. First, then, let us see, “ what is meant by this Wisdom,” which, according to the estimate of Solomon, is of such great price. “ Wisdom is the principal thing, says he; therefore get wisdom;” and he subjoins, in the next clause, which according to the Eastern mode of proverbial writing, is explanatory of the former, “ and with all thy getting, get understanding.” By Wisdom, therefore, or Understanding, which is the same, is meant, that cultivation and enlargement of mind, which enables a man clearly to see and understand all those things, which concern his present and future well-being.

CICERO, than whom no man was a better judge,—for no man more earnestly sought, or better understood the true nature of Wisdom; no man, I mean, of the heathen world;—Cicero, has given nearly the same definition of *Wisdom*. “ What, says he, is more desirable than Wisdom? What more excellent in itself; what more useful to man, or more worthy his pursuit? They who earnestly seek for it, are called philosophers; for philosophy, in the strict meaning of the

word, is no other than the *love of Wisdom*. But Wisdom, as defined by the ancient philosophers, is the knowledge of things divine and human, and of their Efficient Causes; the study of which whoever despises, I know not what he can think worthy of his approbation. For, whether you seek for an agreeable amusement, or a relaxation from care; what can be comparable to those studies, which are always searching out for something, that may tend to make life more easy and happy? Are you desirous of learning the principles of fortitude and virtue?—This, or none beside, is the art by which you may acquire them. They who affirm that there is no art in things of the greatest moment, while nothing, even the most trifling, is attained without the aid of art, are men of no reflection, and guilty of the grossest error: But if there is any science of virtue, where shall it be learned, if not in the school of this Wisdom *?"

II. You see one of the noblest properties of this wisdom, this “enlargement of the

* See Cicero de Officiis, Lib. ii. sect. 2.

mind," this "right knowledge of things divine and human," pointed out in these words of Cicero, which I have just read to you, Wisdom is the guide to virtue; unattainable without it, but certainly to be learned in that school. And as virtue, or the right discharge of our duty in every station of life, our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, is at once the best prerogative, and the highest exaltation of the human nature; Wisdom on this account may justly be termed "the principal thing," and eminently merits our most zealous and laborious pursuit. As virtue contains the whole art of right and happy living, it may be unnecessary to enlarge on all those particular branches of virtue, which wisdom inculcates and enforces; But I would just observe, that the study of Wisdom not only enables us to live virtuously, but to live happily. Indeed virtue is happiness: "All the ancient philosophers, says Cicero, thought man's happiness to be derived from virtue alone."

But, it may be possible for the good man to be afflicted with evils; evils of such a sort,

as may take off the zest and relish of life, and render its pleasures vapid and tasteless. In this case the love of Wisdom will be found peculiarly excellent; it will afford the mind a thousand delights, which those who are strangers to it can never experience; and it will so far remove the unavoidable evils of our being, as to render them light and easy to be borne; much the lighter and more easy, for the peculiar comforts and gratifications it affords the soul.

Perhaps it may be thought I do injustice to the cause of Wisdom, by mentioning any particular cases in which it will profit and comfort mankind: In all cases, and in every situation of life, Wisdom is advantageous; and the love of knowledge no less pleasing than profitable. Nay, did learning afford no assistance to virtue; was pleasure the only benefit arising from study; it must, on every account, be allowed to be an amusement of the noblest kind, and every way best suited to the nature of man. "Other relaxations," says the fine writer above quoted, "are peculiar to certain times, places and stages

of life; but letters are the ornament of youth, and the comfort of old age: They throw an additional lustre on prosperity; they are the resource and consolation of adversity: They delight us at home, and are no embarrassment to us when abroad. In short, they are companions to us at night; our fellow-travellers on a journey; and attendants in our rural recesses *."

This is, and hath always been esteemed, one of the most elegant encomiums of letters; of that love of Wisdom, which is so conducive to virtue; which so much promotes and increases the felicity and the comforts of life; and which, as another excellent property, is one of the best and surest means of acquiring riches and honour; "Exalt her, and she shall promote thee," says the wise man; "she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

It requires, I suppose, no great reasoning to prove, that he is most likely to prosper in

* Cic. Orat. pro Archia; N. 16.

this life, whose mind is best cultivated and enlarged with the truest notions of things; and who joins to that cultivated understanding a correspondent practice, not less excelling in virtue than in knowledge. Humanly speaking, there seems no doubt of that man's "Prosperity" in this world, who wisely, virtuously, and diligently fills up the duties of his station. The misfortunes of mankind are for the most part owing to their own ignorance, follies and vices.

Again, "Honour" is the general attendant upon Wisdom. That which peculiarly distinguishes man from the rest of the animal creation, is reason, is understanding; and however absurdly and weakly a man may act, there is no reproach which he bears so ill, or takes so heinously, as a reproach on his understanding. It is on this account, that, however deficient men may be in knowledge, however rude and uninformed in mind; you generally find them more or less affecting the appearance of knowledge. Hence that vanity, so universal amongst the sons of men. But the true value and general approbation of

knowledge clearly follow from hence: If its appearance be so desirable, what must the reality be? Experience confirms this observation. Who are they of ancient times, but the wisest and best informed, whose memories are handed down to us; who are most honoured and regarded by us?—Who are they, amongst our cotemporaries, whom we look up to with eyes of veneration and respect, but the wise and well informed; the judicious, and the good?

But, besides virtue, besides the most substantial pleasure, and highest consolation; besides riches and honour; the wise man mentions another property of wisdom, another blessing which she confers; and that is, “length of days;” which, whether it be understood of temporal or of eternal life, is strictly true. We all know that the wisdom which enlarges our mind with a right understanding of God and of ourselves; and which leads us to the practice of all those duties which our nature and situation require, is that which necessarily recommends to the favour of our Almighty Judge; and, as it fits

us for the fruition, so will it certainly, through CHRIST, admit us to the joys of eternity.

And it is equally certain, that the love of this Wisdom and the practice of Virtue, which we consider as its inseparable attendant, will tend above all things to lengthen our present existence. There can be no doubt, that the chances of long life are infinitely on the side of him, who lives in the constant exercise of all those virtues which are most salutary to the human frame; who neither breaks nor destroys his constitution by irregularity of life or the debaucheries of vice; the known consequences of which are, if not a speedy death, yet what perhaps is worse, a dying life;—a life but lengthened out for woe; harrassed with tormenting diseases, rendered still more tormenting by painful reflection, and a total unacquaintance with the consolations of Wisdom. To live is not merely to breathe; it is to enjoy oneself, Happy in that right and pleasing self possession, which Wisdom and Virtue only can give *. So that he, who lives in the en-

* See some fine pieces of professor *Hoffman's*, translated in the Christian's Magazine. Vol. 6.

joyment of these, though his life be extended but to half the span of his, who dissipates it in folly and vice, may well be said to live double the age of the latter ; may well be said, though he dies but in youth, to come “ like a ripe shock of corn to the grave ;” while the man of vice and folly must be thought to die immaturely, though he dies at fourscore*.

It is true, that as health and long life are not always and invariably the consequences of temperance, so neither is a right practice invariably the consequence of a right knowledge. But I have made one constant remark, which I never yet saw fail,—and which should be to you, my young friends, the strongest incentive to cultivate learning ; should be to parents the strongest reason to enable and encourage their children to that cultivation :—I have always remarked, that “ the most studious are the most virtuous ;” that they who had the greatest love for Wisdom, and the best application in the pursuit

* See Isaiah lrv. 20. and the Book of Wisdom, Chap. iv. ver. 8, 9, 13, 16.

of it, were always the most ingenuous in their minds, and the most blameless in their manners. The reason is obvious: The pleasing and worthy pursuits in which they are engaged, leave them no time or thoughts for those criminal dissipations, to which idleness and inattention always lead.

But further, Wisdom presents to the mind, once charmed with its beauty, and engaged in its acquisition, the loveliest and most regular order of things; accustoms it to contemplate what is most fair, decent and becoming; and consequently so engages it in the love and approbation of these, as to render whatever is opposite to them disagreeable and disgusting; but vice, above all things disgusting and disagreeable, as being most peculiarly opposite, and in itself most deformed. For as virtue, considered in every respect, is most lovely, and such as would strike all mankind with the greatest admiration (according to the observation of Plato) if it could be made visible in an human form; So is vice the most odious and hateful; the perverter of all order, and con-

sequently, the absolute destroyer of all moral beauty.

Acquaint yourselves, therefore, early, my young hearers, with that Wisdom, which will represent to your admiring view Virtue in her loveliest form; the best guide of your youth, and the surest protectress of your innocence: That Wisdom, whose encomium Solomon hath so finely drawn, and which may serve in a great measure as the summary of what has been before advanced. “ I loved her, says he, above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light; for the light that cometh from her never goeth out: All good things together came unto me with her, and innumerable treasures in her hands: I learned diligently, and do communicate her liberally; I do not hide her riches; for she is a treasure unto men that never faileth, which they that use become the friends of God, being commended for the gifts that come from learning. Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence, flowing from the glory of the Almighty: Therefore can no defiled thing fall into her;

for she is the brightness of the everlasting light; the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness: In all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God; for God loveth none but them that dwell with Wisdom. In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility; yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her; for she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of his works. If "Riches" be a possession to be desired in this life, what is richer than Wisdom which worketh all things? And if "Prudence" work, who of all that are, is a more cunning worker than she? And if a man love "Righteousness," her labours are virtues: For she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude*; which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life. If a man desire much "Experience," she knoweth things of old, and conjectureth aright what is to come. She knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and can expound dark sentences: She foreseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons

* See Cic. de Offic. N. 14. whose words are remarkably similar to the above.

and times. Therefore I purpose to take her to me, to live with me, knowing that she will be a counsellor of good things; and a comfort in cares and griefs. For her sake I shall have estimation among the multitude, and honour with the elders, though I be young. I will therefore repose myself with Wisdom; for her conversation hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no sorrow, but pleasantness and joy. To be allied unto Wisdom is immortality; great comfort is it to have her friendship. In the works of her hands, are infinite riches; in the exercise of conference with her, prudence; and in talking with her, a good report *."

Thus many and great are the advantages which you will reap from an acquaintance with Wisdom; advantages sufficient to stimulate every ingenuous mind to the closest and most diligent pursuit of it. But, mistake not the matter, nor suppose that this is an affair of mere indifference, a thing of choice, left to your own inclinations whether you will or will not pursue it: It is very much the

* See Book of Wisdom, Chap. v.

contrary ; you are under the strictest “ obligations, from motives of duty to God, to your parents, to society, to yourselves, to seek for this Wisdom ; and in neglecting to do so, will not only deprive yourselves of the best blessings which your nature can share, but will become equally criminal and contemptible.”

(1.) God, the great father of the world, of his immense bounty has created you a reasonable being ; has given you powers and faculties, elevated far above the animal world ; capable of the noblest enlargement, capable of the knowledge of Him, of nature, of yourselves ; capable of producing all those fruits of good science and good practice, which are the dignity, the ornament, the prerogative of your race. And can you weakly and vainly suppose, that there is no duty incumbent upon you to improve and to enlarge these faculties ? If so, they are given you in vain ; and you are insensible of that which is the distinguishing excellence of your nature. It had been as well for you to have been created an horse, or a swine.

No! Reject the impious position! Say not that God, the all-wise and all-good, does any thing in vain; he gave you those faculties and powers that you might improve them, and thereby improve your own happiness; that you might improve them, and thereby obtain his favour: For, we may be certainly assured, that the improvement of that mind which he has made capable of improvement, and appointed various means to that end, must be acceptable to him. Nothing can be plainer than this, from a consideration of the Christian System. What is the great aim and design of that System? For what purpose all this labour of love; all this anxiety of omnipotence itself?—Solely for the perfection of the human mind; solely for the spiritual improvement of mankind; the present virtue and comfort, the future perfection and happiness of all who believe and embrace this system.

Can you then a moment doubt, that a neglect to improve your minds, is not only

* “If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm.”

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, 4.

highly displeasing, but criminal in the sight of God ? Thwarting his noblest purposes in nature and grace ; and reducing the creature he formed for the sublimest enjoyments, to a level with the beasts that perish *.

(2.) You reverence your “ Father in heaven ;” and therefore will duly value and improve his best gifts : But your “ Parents on earth” have a further claim upon you. You cannot doubt their love, which, all your life long, hath exerted its tender and affectionate offices towards you. It is this love which

* How men, whose plentiful fortunes allow them leisure to improve their understandings, can satisfy themselves with a lazy ignorance, I cannot tell ; but, methinks they have a low opinion of their souls, who lay out all their income in provision for the body, and employ none of it to procure the means and helps of knowledge ; who take great care to appear always in a neat and splendid outside, and would think themselves miserable in coarse cloaths, or a patched coat ; and yet contentedly suffer their minds to appear abroad in a pye-bald livery of coarse patches and borrowed shreds, such as it has pleased chance, or their country taylor (I mean the common opinion of those they have conversed with) to cloath them in. I will not mention how unreasonable this is, for men that ever think of a future state, and their concernment in it ; which no rational man can avoid to do sometimes. *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.* B. iv. C. xx.

causes them, at much expence and pains, to provide you the best education they are able; and they provide you this education, from a full persuasion which they, with the wisest and best of mankind have imbibed, that such an education is one of the greatest blessings that youth can enjoy, and the likeliest means which they can propose for your acquisition of Wisdom; that Wisdom, which they, with us, are clearly satisfied, will give virtue, comfort, riches, honour and health to your life: A Wisdom, which “is better than all; more valuable than rubies; and all that you can desire is not to be compared with it.”

Can any design, can any purpose be more kind or amiable? Oh! my young friends, think what a charge you must incur; think in what a light you must appear, if you disappoint a purpose so kind and amiable! and repay—how sadly, how ungratefully repay,—all the sollicitude, all the expence of your affectionate parents, by idleness and inattention; by wretchedly wasting that time, which can never return; and, instead of treasuring up

learning and knowledge, suffering the wild weeds of ignorance and vice to grow rampant in your hearts, henceforward never by human power to be rooted up! I will not suppose that such ingratitude and baseness can dwell in the human mind: It cannot be, but a sense of your parents' love and care must operate forcibly, and incite you to such diligence and close application as will happily obtain the end desired, and crown every wish that throbs most anxiously at those parents' hearts.

(3.) But not your parents only, "Society" has a claim upon you. You are now training up, my young friends, to fill your parts in the future circle of life: You are to become members of that society, which subsists by a mutual and relative discharge of duties amongst its members: And in whatever station God shall be pleased to place you, as you will have much need of the aid and assistance of others, so must you perform your duty, and concur for the universal good. Unless you do your part, what right or reason have you to expect that others should do theirs? An igne-

rant, idle man is a dead weight on society; a wicked profligate man is a pest, is a nuisance to society: But a wise and virtuous man, who labours by all means in his power to advance the universal good, to improve the knowledge and the happiness of mankind, is at once an ornament to his nature, and a blessing to the community; a good planet, shining with a benign influence on all around him; the truest resemblance of his God, whose goodness is continually displaying itself through the whole extent of being; and, like that God, seeking pleasure in conferring good, and feeling happiness, according to the degree in which he communicates it.

You, my young friends, must be either this idle and useless, this wicked and noxious, or, this good and beneficent member of society: And it depends, principally depends upon your improvement in youth, on the present enlargement of your minds in true learning and knowledge, to determine your future character. If you omit to search for, and to treasure up that wisdom which is more precious than rubies, society will have great

cause to upbraid and condemn you : It calls upon you, with the united and important voice of all its members, to consider what you are hereafter to be ; and in that consideration to form yourselves carefully, that you may do good, be honourable, and honoured.

Nor does it call upon You only : Society has, in this respect, a just right to call upon Parents, and especially upon those entrusted with the care of youth.

Some ancient states were so strongly impressed with this notion, that they left not the important charge of education to the hazard of parental neglect, or precarious choice. They considered children as the property of the publick ; and they were thoroughly convinced how much the welfare of that public depended upon their right and early information. We act differently ;—whether more wisely, is not our present inquiry. It is, however, most undoubted, that a right sense of this claim of the public, of this debt to society, should influence all parents to

give their children the best and most rational education they can ; should peculiarly influence every Instructor of youth to form the minds and manners of those committed to his care, in such a way, that they may best be enabled to fill their future stations in life, with comfort to themselves, and with advantage to others. A duty, alas ! for the most part, how carelessly, how perfunctorily performed !

'Tis a mistake :—The business of education is not merely to teach the child a few dead languages ; to enable him to write finely ; to understand the sciences ; to fill the head, while the heart is neglected, and the mind uncultivated with moral knowledge. We may say of these what our Saviour said, when speaking of the pharisees : “ These ought ye to have done ; but not to have left the other undone.” There is in youth sufficient time for all : The improvement of the heart may well and properly go hand in hand with the information of the head ; and he is a very unskilful, as well as a very blameable instructor, who either knows not, or cares not, to unite both together.

(4.) No, my young friends; you must not neglect either: The acquisition of liberal science is most necessary, most useful, most pleasing. It has a thousand comforts, a thousand satisfactions attending it. For my own part, I think, I would rather be without my existence, than without the exquisite gratifications it has long, and will, I am persuaded to the grave afford me,—thanks to the tender and judicious care of the best of parents! * Cultivate therefore liberal science, as one of the most distinguished blessings of heaven; but still cultivate liberal science as the handmaid of sublimer knowledge. Moral virtue and the improvement of the heart are graces, which give to science its lustre, and to life its worth; they teach us to live; to act as children of God, and heirs of Hea-

* What (says Cicero) are the pleasures of a luxurious table, of games, of shews, of sensuality, when compared with those resulting from the study of letters?—A study, which, in men of sense and good education, still increases in charms with their years? Whence that fine saying of Solon, “That he grew old; still every day learning something new.” Certainly, no enjoyment can surpass this pleasure of the mind, &c.” See *De Senect.* c. 14. and *Pensées*, p. 138,—9.

ven: They expand, and enlarge the soul; and, joined to the love of liberal science, prepare us for the full draught of that comprehensive knowledge, which we shall enjoy when emancipated from the school of this world, and admitted to our inheritance in Heaven.

Cultivate therefore liberal science, under the sanction and guidance of true virtue and religion: You owe this, not only to your God, to your parents, to society, but to Yourselfs also. Need I urge the reason, after what hath been said in this discourse? Wish you to be virtuous, and to be happy? To possess your minds in calmness and in peace? Wish you to enjoy the honours and riches of this world? Wish you for health and length of days here, for a comfortable and honourable old age, and for the joys of eternal life hereafter? Or, in one word, Do you truly love yourselves? Then you will "get Wisdom; and with all your endeavours, you will strive, now in your youth, to get understanding."

Over and above all the motives thus urged, led me add, and let me intreat you seriously to weigh, this one further consideration: "That this is the only season for the acquisition of wisdom; that youth,—the short and quickly-passing period of youth,—is the only time when you can acquire it: This passed unimproved, you will be left to mourn, in a dark and deserted old age, the wretched irretrievable waste of former time, and the impossibility of gaining that knowledge, the value and importance of which you will then too feelingly experience: The value and importance of which you will do well now to estimate, by their opinion of its loss, by their lamentation for the want of this capital advantage, who never were so blest as to enjoy the means of early improvement.*"

* "Letters, says one of the finest writers of the present times, are the ornament of youth, and the comfort of old age. For example, without that comfort, what a miserable creature should I be, oppressed as I am by various physical ills, and cut off from society by my unfortunate deafness? But, thank God, I had reflection enough, even at your age, to consider the necessity and the utility of knowledge, in every stage of life; and giddy as I then was, I always contrived to have an hour's voluntary reading in a day. This gave me a habit of reading, which must be acquired young

“ There is a certain season (says an able writer) when our minds may be enlarged ;

or never. A very honest, but illiterate friend and cotemporary of mine, who had laid in no stock of learning in his youth, but had led a fashionable, dissipated, thoughtless life, began to grow a little weary of himself at fifty, and quite fatigued with his time and himself at threescore. He grew melancholick, as well he might ; and told me, with shame and sorrow, the cause of it. I advised him to read amusing books, such as the Spectators, Tatlers, &c. “ Yes, answered he, so I would, if I could ; but as I have never read in my life, I cannot begin at threescore, and I would rather take physic, than any book whatsoever. Would you think it, I cannot read a whole Spectator without being tired to death.”—This is by no means an uncommon case with illiterate, ignorant men, except they be handicrafts-men and labourers, whose hands and legs find them occupation enough, and secure them from the insufferable load of time unemployed. The Jesuits have a very good rule with their scholars ; they shut them up in the school for one hour every day, to what they call voluntary study : They may, during that time, read whatever book they please, but some book or other they must read. This gives them a habit of reading ; and some of them have assured me, that they are as impatient for that hour of study, as they are for the hour of breakfast. Now, why should not you, though not under the law of the Jesuits, be a law unto yourself, for the same purpose, and resolve to read only one hour to yourself every day, without fail. Choose your book ; I do not care whether it be Tom Thumb, Tom Jones, or Thomas Aquinas. This will use you to read, and that is all my aim at present : As you grow older and wiser, you will choose your books better and better.

when a vast stock of useful truths may be acquired; when our passions will readily submit to the government of reason; when right principles may be so fixed in us, as to influence every important action of our future lives: But the season for this extends neither to the whole, nor to any considerable length of our continuance upon earth: It is limited to a few years of our term; and if throughout these we neglect it, error or ignorance, is, according to the ordinary course of things, entailed upon us. Our will becomes our law; our lusts gain a strength, which we afterwards vainly oppose: Wrong inclinations become so confirmed in us, that they defeat all our endeavours to correct them."†

But, my young friends, there is still one reason further, why you should lose no single moment of this short, this only season of improvement: 'Tis possible you may be cut

Always be doing something, but let that something be really *something*, and not an idle loss of time upon nothings. A French Author says very justly, *qu'il aime mieux ne rien faire, que de faire des Riens.*"—See also Spectator, No. 52. On the Use of Time.

† See Locke, and p. 140. foregoing.

off, even in the midst of this season: 'Tis possible you may be deprived of all the means of future improvement; and then how miserable will be your own case! How inconsolable that of your parents!

But I spare the sad reflection. Think, on the contrary, how great a blessing it will be, if God should please early to call you hence, to be then found ripe in Wisdom, and fit for Heaven. Amidst all their tender lamentations for your loss, your parents will find the amplest consolation in that thought; and with weeping eyes, but thankfully-resigned hearts, will adore the goodness of Him, who gave, and who fitted so early for himself, the child of their bosom!

These reflections, I trust, will be sufficient to make you solicitous for the acquisition of Wisdom, and diligent in all the means to procure it. The direction of those means must be left to their prudence to whose care you are committed; and in some measure to the station of life, for which you are designed; But of this I shall speak more

fully in my next. In the mean time, let me only just recommend a serious review of all those considerations which may awaken in your hearts a love of Wisdom, and a just sense of its necessity and utility. From hence, of consequence, will flow a steady and uniform application; and of such application, be well assured, the certain issue is success; † that is, I mean, always subordinate to the assisting grace of God. Without this, all the endeavours of frail men are weak and unavailing; and for this you should, night and day, prostrate yourselves in humble supplication before the throne of grace; imitating herein the example of Solomon, who, struck with the beauty and excellence of Wisdom, tells us, that “perceiving he could not otherwise obtain her, except God gave her unto him; he prayed unto the Lord and besought him with his whole heart.” You know how pleasing his prayer was to God, and how eminent the success of it. May it prove equally acceptable and equally successful at present; while with united hearts we present

† “Who so seeketh her early,” saith the wise man, “shall have no great travel; for he shall find her sitting at his doors.” See Wisdom, Chap. vi. 14, &c.

it to the throne of grace, on behalf of you all.

“ O God of our Fathers, and Lord of mercy ! who hast made all things of thy word, and ordained Man through thy Wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made ; give us all—but especially to those young ones of thy flock, who are training up in the way to life ;—give them Wisdom that sitteth by thy throne, and reject them not from among thy children ! Oh, send her out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory ; that being present she may labour with them, that they may know what is pleasing unto thee : For she knoweth and understandeth all things ; and she shall lead them soberly in their doings, and preserve them in her power. So shall their works be acceptable ; so shall their lives be honourable ; so shall their latter end be blessed ; and they shall dwell with thee and with Wisdom for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen !

ANECDOTES

To recommend an Early Application to
Wisdom.

1. Bias, as he was one day sailing with some wicked men who prayed in a storm, intreated them to be silent, lest their voices should be heard amidst the pious prayers of others; and being asked by one of them, what that piety, which he talked of, meant? He answered, "It is to no purpose to speak to a man of those things which he never intendeth to practise." When this same philosopher came to die, he bequeathed this instruction to those who survived him: "That they should so order their lives, as if they were to live a *very little*, and a *very great* while." From which principle of his, his friend Cleobulus on his death-bed inferred this conclusion: "That those men only live to any purpose, who overcome carnal pleasures, make virtue familiar, and vice a stranger to their souls; the great rule of life, as he observed, being to be moderate, and the great work of it to meditate, according to the remark of his cotemporary Periander,

who hated pleasures which were not immortal; leaving behind him this maxim Μελέτη, τὸ πᾶν: "Meditation is every thing."

2. Antisthenes being asked, what he got by his learning, answered, " That he could talk to himself; could live alone; and needed not go abroad, and be beholden to others for delight." The same person desired nothing of the Gods to make his life happy, but the spirit of Socrates; thereby meaning Contentment to bear any wrong or injury, and to continue in a quiet temper, whatever might befall him.

3. Diogenes seeing a stranger in Lacedemon at great pains to prepare his matters, and decorate himself for an approaching feast day: ' Pray, Sir, said he, what may you be about? Don't you know that every day is a festival to a good mind !' He compared this world to a Temple dignified by the presence of the Deity; in which man is so constituted, as to be under a moral obligation to demean himself with integrity, as always under the inspection of an all-seeing God.

4. Count Oxenstiern, the Chancellor of Sweden, was a person of the first quality, rank, and abilities in his own country, and whose share and success not only in the chief ministry of affairs there, but in the greatest negotiations of Europe, during his time, rendered him no less considerable abroad. After all his knowledge and honours, being visited in his retreat from publick business by Commissioner Whitlock, our ambassador to Queen Christina; at the close of their conversation, he said to the ambassador, “ I, Sir, have seen much, and enjoyed much of this world; but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God who has given me time to know him, and likewise myself. All the comfort I have, and all the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is the knowledge of God’s love in my heart, and the reading of this blessed book,—laying his hand on the bible.—You are now, Sir, (continued he) in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day better understand and relish what I say to you. Then you will find that there is more

Wisdom, truth, comfort, and pleasure, in retiring and turning your heart from the world, in the good spirit of God, and in reading his sacred word, than in all the courts and all the favours of Princes."

5. The Romans, we are told, built their Temple of Virtue immediately before that sacred to Honour; to teach that it was necessary to be virtuous, before the being honoured. St. Augustin observes, that these temples were contiguous, but so, as that there was no entering into that of Honour, till after having passed through that of Virtue.

6. Seneca, after a serious study of all the Philosophy then in the world, was almost a Christian in his severe reproofs of vice, and commendations of virtue. His expressions are sometimes divine, excelling the common sphere of Heathen Authors. How beautiful is that sentence of his in the Preface to his Natural Questions: "Oh! What a pitiful thing would man be, if his soul did not soar above these earthly things." And though he was sometimes doubtful about the future

condition of his soul, yet he tells his dear Lucilius with what pleasure he thought of its future bliss; and then goes on to argue, that the soul of man hath this mark of divinity in it, that it is most pleased with divine speculations, and converses with them as with matters in which it is most nearly concerned. When this soul, saith he, hath once viewed the vast dimension of the Heavens it despises the meanness of its former little cottage. Were it not for these contemplations, it had not been worth our while to have come into this world, nor would it make us amends for any pains and care we take about this present life." And at length he concludes his arguments with this remarkable reason whence to infer the blessedness of pious souls; saying, "Let us not wonder that good men go to God after death; since God vouchsafes to enter into them here, in order to render them good; for no soul can be good without him." See his *Ep.* 73.

7. Alexander the Great being asked, why he honoured his master Aristotle more than Philip, his father, he replied, "My father

brought me down from heaven to earth; but my master made me ascend from earth to heaven." The one only gave him life, the other instructed him how to live well.

8. It is said that when Virgil, that Prince of the Latin Poets, was asked by his friend, why he studied so much accuracy in the plan of his poem, the propriety of his characters, and the purity of his diction; he answered, *In æternum vivo*: "I write for eternity." What more weighty consideration can there be to justify and enforce the utmost vigilance and circumspection in life than this, *In æternum vivo*; "I am living for eternity?"

9. Pericles, in his famous oration at the funeral of those Athenian young men, who perished in the Samian expedition, has a thought very much celebrated by several ancient critics; namely, "That the loss which the commonwealth suffered by the destruction of its youths, was like the loss which the year must sustain by a destruction of the spring." The prejudice which the public sustains from a wrong education of

children, is an evil of the same nature; as it in a manner starves posterity, and defrauds our country of those persons, who, with due care, might make an eminent figure in their respective posts of life.

10. The Spartans, we find, paid a particular attention to the peculiar genius and disposition of their youths, in order the better to adapt them to such spheres, as were most suitable to their capacities, and might be most beneficial to Society. Among them, it was not lawful for the father himself to bring up his children after his own fancy. As soon as they were seven years old, they were all lifted in several companies, and disciplined by the public. The old men were spectators of their performances, who often raised emulations among them, and set them at strife one with another, that by those early discoveries they might see how their several talents lay, and, without any regard to their quality, dispose of them accordingly for the service of the commonwealth. By this means Sparta soon became the mistress of Greece, and famous through

the whole world for her civil and military discipline.

11. Agefilas, King of Sparta, being asked "what he thought most proper for boys to learn?" Answered, "what they ought to do, when they come to be men." Thus a wiser than Agefilas hath inculcated, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it †."

12. Claudius Cæsar erased the name of a Greek Prince from the roll of the Judges, and sent him to travel, on finding that he was ignorant of the Latin tongue.

13. The story of Simonides may stand as a thousand arguments for assiduous application to knowledge, and demonstrates that the wise man's true riches are lodged within himself. That excellent Poet, the better to support himself under his narrow circumstances, went the tour of Asia, singing from city to city the praise of their heroes and

† Proverbs, Chap. xxii. ver. 6.

great men, and receiving their rewards. By this means having at last become wealthy, he determined to return to his own country by sea, he being a native of the island Ceös. Accordingly, he went on board a vessel, which had not been long on the voyage, before a terrible tempest arose, and reduced it to a wreck in the midst of the sea. Upon this, some of the people packed up their treasures; others, their most valuable merchandize, and tied them around their bodies, as the best means of supporting their future existence, should they escape the present dangers. But amidst all their sollicitude, a certain inquisitive person observing Simonides quite inactive, and seemingly unconcerned, asked him, "What! don't you look after any of your effects?" "No, replied the Poet, calmly; all that is mine is with me:" Then some few of them, and he, among the rest, took to swimming, and several got safe ashore; while many more perished in the waves, wearied and encumbered with the burden they had bound about them. To complete the calamity, soon after some plunderers came down upon the coast, and seized all that each man

had brought away with him, leaving them naked. The ancient city of Clazomenæ happened to be near at hand, to which the shipwrecked people repaired; here a certain man of letters who had often read the verses of Simonides, and was his great admirer though unknown, on one day hearing him speak in the market-place, inquired of him his name, and finding it was he, gave him a welcome reception at his own house, and supplied him with clothes, money and servants to attend him; while the rest of the company were forced to carry a letter about this foreign city, setting forth their case, and begging bread: The next day Simonides met with them in his walks, and thus addressed them. "Did I not tell you, my friends, that all which I had was with me? But you see all that which You could carry away with you, perished." Thus Wisdom is proved to be the most durable possession, and the best security amidst every want or trial.

14. Nicholas Breakspear, who, on his advancement to the Popedom, assumed the name of Adrian IV. was, in the early part of

life, reduced to the necessity of submitting to servile offices for bread. He studied in France, where, though he laboured under the pressures of poverty, he made a wonderful progress in learning. He was, for his merit, chosen Abbot of St. Rufus, in Provence; in 1146, made a Cardinal; and in 1154, he succeeded to the Pontificate. One day, on an interview with an intimate friend, he told him, that all the hardships of his life were nothing, in comparison to the Papal Crown; and speaking of the difficulties and sorrows he had experienced, he observed, “that he had been as it were strained through the alembick of affliction.” This great and exemplary man was in such high veneration, that Frederick King of the Romans, at an interview with him in Italy, condescended to hold his stirrup while he mounted his horse: He was the only Englishman that ever sat in the papal chair.

15. Thomas, Earl of Dorset, who lived in the reign of James I. may not only be ranked with the chief men of his age as a scholar and a statesman, but was moreover an

admirable manager of his private fortunes and the public revenues. The former indeed he had been called to from the most substantial motives ; for it seems, he succeeded early in life to an immense estate, which, as he thought it set him above œconomy, he lavished without care. However, in a few years, by means of his excessive magnificence and dissipation, he found himself involved in debt. The indignity of being on a certain day kept in waiting by an Alderman, of whom he had occasion to borrow money, opened his eyes, and made so deep an impression upon him, that he resolved from that moment to become a better œconomist. Accordingly, we are told, he managed his finances so well, that he was thought a proper person to succeed the great Cecil, Lord Burleigh, as Lord High Treasurer of England.

16. The famous Torquato Tasso, by his Poem, intitled Rinaldo, extended his reputation throughout all Italy, but greatly chagrined his father, who thought it might seduce him from studies more advantageous. Accordingly, he went to Padua, where his son then

was, to remonstrate against his apparent purpose of devoting himself to philosophy and poetry, and made use of many very harsh expressions; all which Tasso heard with a patience and tranquillity that made the old gentleman still more angry: At last, "Of what use, cried he, is that Philosophy, on which you value yourself so much?"—"Sir, replied Tasso calmly, it has enabled me to endure the harshness even of Your reproofs."

16. Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth, a few months before he died, sent to his friends the Bishops of Winchester and Worcester, intreating them to draw up for him out of the word of God, the plainest and best directions for making his peace with him; adding, "That it was great pity men knew not to what end they were born into the world, till they were just at the point of quitting it."

17. Sir John Mason was born in the reign of Henry VII. and lived in high esteem with Henry 8. Edward 6. Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth; having been a Privy Counsellor to

each of the four last, and an accurate observer of all the various revolutions and vicissitudes of those times. When he lay on his death-bed, he called his family together, and addressed them in the following terms: "Lo! [†] here I have lived to see five Princes, and have been a Counsellor to four. I have seen the most remarkable things in foreign parts, and been present at most state transactions for thirty years together: And I have learned this, after so many years experience, That Seriousness is the greatest Wisdom, Temperance the best Physician, and a good Conscience the best Estate. And were I to live again, I would exchange the Court for a Cloyster; my Privy Counsellor's buffles for an Hermit's retirement, and the whole life I have lived in the Palace, for one hour's enjoyment of God in my Closet. All things else forsake me, except my God, my duty, and my prayers."

S E R M O N VI.

ADVICE TO APPRENTICES.

EPHESIANS vi. 6, 7, 8.

Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ; doing the will of God from the heart: With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

WE recommended in the last Sermon an early and diligent Application to Learning;—to the attainment of that Wisdom which is the guide and the comfort of life. The duty, necessity and advantages of this application were then fully shewn; which, though they affect all young persons, in an especial manner, yet do they more particularly concern such, as, designed for the Learned Professions, can never expect credit or advancement in life, if they are wanting in a continued application to science. To those therefore, what we have said on this subject

may be applicable and useful throughout the whole of their education. But it will be necessary to offer further and more particular counsel to those, who, designed to fill up the Common Stations of life, are, after a short period, to be removed from literary improvements to a more active situation, where, giving up their liberty for a season, they are bound to the service of another.

I would not have it understood as if it was either fitting or proper for a young person to drop all literary pursuits and attainments when become an Apprentice, and engaged in business; so far from it, the pursuit of Wisdom is, as we have shewn, in a great measure, incumbent upon all; and there cannot be a more useful or entertaining amusement for young men, than reading at their leisure hours: A love for this, and a proper attention to it, will not only be found highly improving, but will answer a thousand good purposes. It will serve more especially to keep them from the dangers of temptation, and to fill up happily those vacant hours, which, if left unoccupied, idleness and vice will too probably

seize. Parents and masters therefore would each do well, equally to encourage in their children and apprentices an affection for liberal science; which will undoubtedly be attended with the most salutary effects; will not only prove an effectual preservative from vice, but the greatest improver of virtue.

Be it observed, my young friends, that I now speak of Reading merely as an Amusement; and no Amusement must ever interfere with the time and the duty you owe to those, who are made your masters. Placed under them, as they owe to you all the care, improvement, and knowledge they can impart, so you owe to them, all the "Time," "Fidelity," "Industry," and "Attention" which they require.

With respect to "Time" in the first place, consider, that this now is no longer your own, but your master's. Therefore be careful not to idle or squander it away, but to improve every moment of it, that so you may not only fulfill the duties of your station, but gain such allowed hours, as may be pro-

perly employed to your own emolument and satisfaction. There is nothing so valuable and important as Time; the flying moments of it, once passed, are never to be retrieved: Ever mindful hereof, delay not the immediate performance of that, which, the occasion slipped, you may perhaps never have it in your power to perform at all. Be assured, there is nothing will so much recommend you to an observing master, as a regular distribution, and exact improvement of time. See Vol. iii. Sermon. xvii. Part I.

As of your Time, so must you be particularly careful of your "Trust." Your master's interests are become yours; you owe him the strictest fidelity; and if you are found deficient herein, you must never expect either confidence or character. Fidelity shews itself in words and actions, and may be distinguished into Truth in words, and Integrity in deeds. Nothing is so dishonourable and disgraceful, as lying or a deviation from truth. It is always the mark of a mean and worthless spirit; a vice, God knows, which too early discovers itself in the human

mind; and to discourage and eradicate which, no caution or attention can be too great or severe. As it is founded in the worst principles, so is it productive of the greatest evils; not only extremely vicious and faulty in itself; but generally the introduction to and cloke for other faults and vices. Simply to *lie*, is an offence; to lie in order to conceal a fault, is a double offence; but to lie with a malicious purpose, with a view to injure or prejudice others, is an offence aggravated tenfold, and truly diabolical; an indication of the most corrupt and abandoned heart: And the mischief of it is, that they, who indulge themselves in the practice at all, generally are led on by the father of lies to the very excess of it. Never, therefore, in a smaller or greater matter, suffer your lips to deviate from the truth: Speak it honestly, openly, and without reserve: You cannot conceive how easily the mind is corrupted by the slightest indulgence in falsehood, by the least licence given to little mean reservations, equivocations, and mental chicaneries. Be assured, a fault is always

doubled by denying it; an' open, frank confession disarms resentment, and concillates affection: such a regard to truth will gain you credit, and give you dignity. It is an high, it is an amiable character of any man, of a young man more especially, to say, that his veracity is always to be depended upon; whereas the contrary is just as low and despicable. And if you accustom yourself to falsehood, such will be Your character; for the natural consequence of being caught in one lie, is, in future, Doubt of whatever you shall say: And I would ask, Can there be any thing more disgraceful, than to stand in such a light amongst your fellow creatures, as to have your words despised and unregarded, and even the truth you speak disbelieved?

I might urge many religious motives to deter from this infamous practice; its contrariety to Christ and his Gospel, which is Truth; its agreement with the devil, who is the father of lies; the signal punishment which God hath sometimes thought fit to inflict upon it; (as in the remarkable case of Ananias

and Sapphira,) and the future and fearful punishment which is denounced upon all liars, that “they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” I might urge these and many other arguments to shew the sinfulness of this practice : But I write not professedly on the subject ; * meaning only, my young friends, to shew you the great importance and necessity of a strict adherence to truth, if you would recommend yourselves to your masters, and indeed, to mankind in general.

There is great reason to believe, that those who are conscientious in their words, will be so in their actions ; that they will shew the same regard to truth in the one as in the other : This is indispensably requisite. The least temptation to fraud must never be suffered to remain a moment in your hearts ; dishonesty will blast your reputation, and all your hopes ; and it will still be the worse in you, to whom your master entrusts the care of his property ; for a breach of trust is ever the highest aggravation of an offence. Al-

* See Vol. iii. p. 54.

ways therefore consider yourself as entrusted with the charge of your master's property ; consider it as most sacred ; and while you never allow in yourself a single thought of embezzling or injuring it, never permit yourself to connive at such practices in others. Next to the being vicious ourselves, is the consenting to, or conniving at vice in others ; and he is not far from falling into the same sin, who can see it with unconcern, or without reproof in another. Not that I would have you busy and pragmatical ; ready at all turns to whisper idle stories in the ears of your superiors. This will certainly render you extremely odious and disgusting to those who are upon a level with you : Your life will become uneasy ; and your own conduct will be most scrupulously examined. But this avoided, no fear or favour should ever influence your honest heart to see your master injured, and to pass by that injury unnoticed. If gentle and seasonable remonstrances will not avail with the injurer, you are bound by all the ties of duty and of honour to give information, lest your connivance at guilt should

be judged, when it is disclosed, an actual participation of it *.

Let me finish this head with briefly hinting to you, that there is a duty which you owe to your master and his family out of doors, as well as within, and a duty of great importance; the neglect of which will tend greatly to deprive you of confidence and esteem; and that is, a caution never to disclose the secrets of your master's family; never to talk unseasonably and improperly of his affairs; much less to whisper any thing which may tend to depreciate his reputation. Indeed your master's reputation should be dear to you as your own, and you should as carefully vindicate and defend it, if you hear it maligned and aspersed, as you would your own. But it is not merely Reputation whereof you are to be thus cautious: There are a thousand little transactions in every family which should never transpire through the walls, and which bear, in the relation, a very

* The example of *Joseph*, as a faithful servant, is too well known to need more than just mentioning in this place.

different appearance from the reality. These it should be your care never to disclose; and though I would advise you, not to desire by any means the trust of other people's secrets, yet, if intrusted, be sure to keep them as religiously as you do your own. One powerful means of enabling you to attain this fidelity, will be a firm resolution to place a bridle on your tongue; to check a forward, prating humour, which is always offensive in young men, and generally prejudicial: For it is not to be questioned, but that the unguarded tongue, which is suffered to run at all adventures, will frequently supply the want of sense with folly, and of truth with falsehood.

Besides this strict Fidelity in words and actions, you owe to your master, and indeed to yourself, "Industry," and close application to business. He expects it from you as his right; and you will do well to give it, as for that reason, so for your own sake also; because thus you will not only improve in the proper knowledge of that business which you are apprenticed to learn, but

will preserve yourself from the numberless dangers attendant upon idleness. Every thing is possible to industry ; and it will be very difficult to produce any instances of men, who, joining strict honesty to continued industry, have failed of their due success in this world*.

Well husbanding your time ; nicely observant of truth, in words and in actions ; industrious and punctual in business, you will necessarily be esteemed. But there is a certain something in behaviour, a certain Manner, which is, as it were, the polishing to the diamond, and highly requisite to render you beloved. Some worthy persons do even the best actions in an ungraceful manner ; they have not, and they do not study the art to please : You should make this your endeavour. Mild, gentle, and affable in your conversation ; easy, and even “attentive” to the wishes of your master, in your actions ; studying every little office which may render you acceptable, and striving to do whatever you do with grace and good nature : Industriously avoiding at the same time every thing which

* See Vol. iii. Sermon xvii. Part 2.

may have the appearance of the least officiousness, or of a busy intrusion where you have no concern.

In short, in this and in all the other instances of your duty to your master, let one general rule ever have its due influence on your conduct, and it will always direct you right: "Consider His interests and welfare as your own." Thus, as a son with a father, you will never injure or see him injured: On the contrary, sensible of your duty to Him, and to your all-seeing master in heaven, you will study to do your part with all fidelity; thus recommending yourself at once to your earthly and your heavenly master.

I have thus far considered your duty in apprenticeship, only as it relates to your Superiors: It will require some care and attention to conduct yourself properly towards your Equals and Inferiors. Your Equals I call your fellow-apprentices, from whose acquaintance, if virtuous and good, you will reap great advantages and comforts, and which you can never be too careful to culti-

vate and cement in a proper manner, as perhaps you may derive from thence through life the highest emolument and satisfaction. If they are vicious and unworthy, the utmost caution will scarce be sufficient, to guard you from the infection of their ill advice and worse example. You must not only set your face like a rock against them; but strengthening your mind every day more and more with religious and virtuous principles, must both repel their noxious persuasions, and at the same time do your utmost to advise and reclaim them from their ruinous principles and practices.

But I dwell not on this subject, as proposing to set forth at large in a future discourse the Dangers of Evil Company, and the proper method of avoiding it. I must not however fail just to advise, that you treat your Inferiors with great courtesy and humanity, at the same time avoiding most carefully, all undue freedom and familiarity, especially with the female servants; and more particularly, if you are so unhappy as to be placed with a master, who, according to the prevalent, but

S E R M O N VI. 181

destructive mode of modern times, thinks himself excused from all care of his family in town, while he flies to indulgence and a country seat: In this case, much prudence and vigilance will on your side be necessary, lest you be enticed into snares, which you may find cause ever to lament, or allow yourself in freedoms, which may imbitter the whole stream of your future life.

To prevent this, and other evils of the like kind, labour to maintain the strictest Self-government, and seek, through God's grace, for a dominion over your passions. Temperance in Meat and Drink is to be maintained invariably:—But this too, is a matter of so great consequence, that we shall afford it a separate discourse. Nor is temperance in Dress of much less consequence. Solomon has well observed “that a man's character may be known by his apparel:” And though certainly different stations not only allow, but even demand different and more elegant modes of dress; yet a foppish attention to it, in every sphere of life, is a mark of imbecillity of understanding and effeminacy of mind.

But in Your sphere of life, where dress, so far from being requisite, * is in a degree reproachful, such an attention will betray much want of prudence indeed; not to say that it will very probably plunge you into expences greater than you are able to bear, and at the same time lead you to shew yourself at such places and in such company, as will prove extremely pernicious to your morals. Neatness, cleanliness and simplicity in apparel are proper to your sphere of life; they are in character; and be assured throughout your life, whatever is so, will always be found right, and will recommend you to the judicious and discerning.

Cautious of your company, temperate in meat and drink, neat and simple in your dress, you will have no temptation to those expensive pleasures, which too often involve young men in inextricable difficulties, and lead them to steps which end only in destruction. This may be said peculiarly of a pleasure, a fashionable Pleasure—very falsely so called,—as it surely deserves to be stigmatized with the appellation

* See the Beauties of Shakespear. Vol. I. p. 220. Hamlet, Act I. Scene 5.

of the most odious Vice; I mean Gaming: which, however common, is so pernicious in its effects, that It also may well claim a separate discourse, to set forth those effects in their proper colours, and to dissuade you, my young friends, from the least approach to so hazardous a precipice. Think not, however, that while I warn you from such as are false and destructive, I would rigidly have you debarred from all Pleasures. Enjoy such as are consistent with virtue and your station; and of these there are sufficient, cheap, allowable, and highly refreshing; such as will neither injure your virtue, your pocket, or your health. Indeed it is observable that the most exquisite, as well as the most innocent of all enjoyments, are those which cost us least; such as that Reading which I mentioned, though somewhat out of place, at the beginning of this discourse; the enjoyment of agreeable and sensible Conversation; the pleasures of Walking, and contemplating the high Beauties of Nature. These pleasures will supply all the relaxation you will need; and, to their great commendation, they afford a quick relish while they last, and leave no remorse when they are over.

But can we say this, of the fashionable pleasures of the town? Ah! my young friends, how I tremble for you, on account of these! Syrens they are, that soothe to destruction: They allure but to spoil, and present the bowl of joy but to intoxicate and poison! Beware of, and fly from them, as you value your own present peace and future felicity in life; nor dare,—till firmly rooted in right principles, till established like a rock in virtue,—dare not to look, lest, enticed by their false beauty, you admire, and are undone.

It is, I well know, extremely difficult for a young man to withstand the artful sneer of ridicule, and the delusive sophistry of persuasion. You must, however, exert all your fortitude; but be sure, if you are ever induced to attend the playhouse, or other places of the like kind, that you never do so out of the company of your master or mistress, or some other grave and respectful person: A thousand perils await you, if alone, or attended by the young, the giddy, and inconsiderate. There is a danger;—how shall I speak of, or warn you against it? Oh

that I had power to infuse virtue into your souls, or to guard you from an evil big with the most fatal and formidable consequence! Beware, as you tender your life and salvation, beware of those infamous pestilential nightly prowlers, who, in the shape of women, take the devil's part, and tempt the innocent and unwary to foul shame and fearful ruin! Disease, and misery are in their embraces: Blasphemy, theft and murder, dwell in their secret chambers.—True; poor miserable wretches! when early and cruelly deluded into this detestable mode of life; when weary of it, and sincerely desirous to repent and amend;—we feel a generous pity for them, and gladly lay open the golden gate of mercy for their reception *. But, while persevering to debauch and delude; while permitted by the shameful negligence of the sleeping magistrate, to infest the most public passes of our streets, to corrupt the health, the peace, the morals, of our people, they can never be painted in too frightful colours; nor, trust me, my young friends, can any colours,

* See the state of the Magdalen Charity, last Edition; with the Sermons, &c.

however frightful, represent them as they are.

I could tell you, if the time or subject allowed, tales which would make attention bleed; of amiable youths, the hopes of their parents, the expectation of their friends, in an unguarded moment deluded and undone by these miscreants: An early, immature or ignominious death, or, what is almost worse, an howling mad-house, ending their sad and mournful history. Oh, my young hearers! beware of these spoilers of innocence, and look not, approach not, parly not with them; fly from them as from the grave; your safety is in flight; and whenever you behold them, with garish dress and artful, painted smiles, attempting to betray, consider you behold serpents prepared to sting you to death; tempters, who for a poor, little, inconsiderable bribe, will prostitute a fair frame, formed by a good God to delight and please; prostitute it to the foulest, filthiest purposes;—their breath pollution, and their connexion worse than a devouring pestilence!

But moral motives and worldly respects, however powerful and persuasive, will be found, my young hearers, utterly ineffectual to preserve you from this, and all other temptations, to give stability to your virtue, and uniformity to your conduct, without the aid of Religion. It is from hence alone that motives sufficient to sway, and succour sufficient to influence, can be derived. Cultivate therefore, with undissembled sincerity, the practice of Religion; that religion, which alone teaches you the true nature and end of your being, which informs you of the value of time, and calls upon you to improve and to redeem it; which exhorts you to speak the truth from the heart, to be just and faithful in all your dealings; to provide things honest in the sight of all men; to study to be quiet, and do your own business; to be temperate in all things, sober, chaste, considering yourselves as the members of Christ, as the temples of the living God; and from that high and awful consideration, dreading to pollute those members, to defile and desecrate those temples.

Religion, teaching you to look up to the omniscient eye of an Almighty Master, will supersede a thousand other rules; will prevent all eye-service, all man-pleasing; will lead you, as the servants of Christ, to do the will of God from an obedient and conscientious heart. For, whatever men may say or urge, (fools and blind!) to loosen the bonds of this divine principle, Religion is that alone, which gives a man a sure and certain government over himself; and consequently, is that alone which can assure others of a good government over him. Suffer not, therefore, your religious principles to be shaken by the sophistry of infidels, or the scoff of sneerers. Suffer not your religious practice to be debauched by the delusions of immorality, or the enticing lure of pleasure; and, as one certain method to preserve you steadfast, let no arguments or considerations ever prevail upon you to profane the Sabbath. If you do it once, you will find yourself more easily induced to do so a second time; and thus you will fall insensibly into a habit. There is not a better rule for the preservation of virtue than to ‘resist beginnings;’ for no

man can tell to what length he shall be carried, who suffers vice of any kind to gain the least ascendancy over him. Let nothing therefore persuade you once to profane the Sabbath *. Depend upon it, the consequences of such profanation are ruinous ; and we generally find, in the wretched confessions of those who conclude their lives ignominiously, that this was the first error which introduced them to a life of profligacy, and a death of shame.

Reverence therefore, and hallow in the strictest manner, God's holy Sabbath. Attend the divine worship regularly each part of the day : Pass the rest either in reading or meditation, or in innocent and amusing walks with such, as you are sure will lead you into no evil, but instruct and improve you by their friendly and rational conversation. If you are so happy as to be placed in the house of a religious master, comply invariably with the rules of his family, and think yourself peculiarly fortunate in so chosen a

* See a Sermon entitled, " A Sabbath Day well spent."
Printed for Faden in Fleet Street.

lot *. If it be otherwise, as there is too much reason to fear in the present dissipated mode of life; if you are left to yourself, or with your fellow-servants, to pass the sabbath, without the careful inspection of a master's eye, Remember always that you have a Master in heaven, and that no neglect of your superiors can ever dispense with your neglect of duty to Him and to them.

But, alas ! let me refer it to the just decision of your hearts, who thus neglect the young men committed to your trust—How, O ye masters ! can you expect that young people placed in your families should discharge their duty to God, to you, and to themselves, when they see you so shamefully neglect your own duty ; leaving them to chance and temptation ; and pursuing your pleasures on that Sabbath especially, which ought to be dedicated to the exercises of religion, and the duties of good example ? Who knows not the prevalence of example in every respect ? Can it be wondered that

* Need I recommend, to enforce the subject of this discourse, the admirable and instructive prints of Mr. Hogarth, called "The good and bad Apprentice ?"

young men (especially if of fortune) think themselves intitled to assume the same licence, and to pass their Sundays in riding, dissipation, and riot? Indeed, the greatest corrupters of youth, in the trading world, next to the evil of country houses and separate families, are the large Premiums given with, and, consequently, the very large liberties given to young men, who yet are supposed to be engaged for a life of servitude, industry, and application. It is, I fear, too common for many to take those large premiums, who very little concern themselves with the morals and virtues of such, as tender parents, with the best hopes, have committed to their trust. It is not easy to say how they can answer to their consciences so gross a neglect. If the necessary management and restraint be more difficult, as probably it may, in proportion to the largeness of the premium, the master should certainly consider himself as engaged to superior care and attention: And it is a truth which none can deny, however strangely they may contradict it in practice, that the higher and more important the charge, the more the master is obliged to abound in instruction,

diligent inspection, and good example. But whatever the charge, nothing can, nothing ever will, excuse an honest and good master from the discharge of these duties. Attentive to the importance whereof, those parents, who are studious of their children's good, will make it their first care,—not to look out for a master, who, most eminent in his station, will possibly prove most negligent of their children, and from whom they may purchase for them the greatest indulgences; that is, the most certain ruin, at the highest rate; as if the virtue and future well-being of their children was not of more consequence, than the gratifying a poor temporary vanity.—But they will make it their first care to place them with a master, who, like Abraham, fears God, and serves him with all his house; whose honesty and good character, founded on this basis, are irreproachable; and from whose virtuous example, the most lively and constant motives will arise to a similarity of conduct.

Happy parents, who thus prudently and wisely chuse! Happy masters, who thus ex-

cellently, and conscientiously rule their families! Happy youths, committed to such faithful and worthy directors! Established in good principles, you will enter upon life with the best hopes; will become an ornament and a blessing to society, and meet the future reward of your good conduct in a kingdom of peace and glory. Amen!

A N E C D O T E S,

For "The Advice to APPRENTICES."

I. The Archbishop of Cambray makes Telemachus declare, that though he was young in years, he was old in the art of knowing how to keep both his own and his friend's secrets. "When my father, says the Prince, went to the siege of Troy, he took me on his knees, and after embracing and blessing me, as he was surrounded by the nobles of Ithaca, "O my friends! said he, into your hands I commit the education of my son; if you ever loved his father, shew it in your care towards him: But above all, do not omit to form him just, sincere, and faithful in keeping a secret." These

words of my father, says Telemachus, were continually repeated to me by his friends, in his absence; who made no scruple of communicating to me their uneasiness, at seeing my mother surrounded with lovers, and the measures they designed to take on that occasion. He adds, that he was so ravished at being thus treated like a man, and at the confidence reposed in him, that he never abused it: Nor could all the insinuations of his father's rivals ever get him to betray what was committed to him under the seal of secrecy. See the Spectator, No. 338.

2. " There is nothing, says Plato, so delightful, as the hearing or the speaking of truth." For this reason it is, that there is no conversation so agreeable, as that of a man of integrity, who hears without any intention to betray, and speaks without any intention to deceive.—As an advocate was pleading the cause of his client in Rome, before one of the prætors, he could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons; upon which, the advocate insisted on the integrity of the

S E R M O N VI. 195

person whom he had produced: But the prætor told him, that where the law required two witnesses he would not accept of one, though it were Cato himself.—Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a Court of Justice, while Cato was still living, shews us more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this great man had gained among his coteremporaries, on the account of his sincerity.

3. “As I was sitting (says an ancient writer) with some Senators of Bruges, before the gate of the Senate House, a certain beggar presented himself to us, and with sighs and tears, and many lamentable gestures, expressed to us his miserable poverty, and asked our alms; telling us at the same time, that he had about him a private maim, and a secret mischief, which very shame restrained him from discovering to the eyes of men. We all pitying the case of the poor man, gave him each of us something, and departed. One, however, amongst us, took an opportunity to send his servant after him, with orders to inquire of him, what that private infir-

mity might be, which he found such cause to be ashamed of, and was so loth to discover. The servant overtook him, and delivered his commission; and after having diligently viewed his face, breast, arms, legs, and finding all his limbs in apparent soundness; "Why, friend, said he, I see nothing whereof you have any such reason to complain." Alas, Sir! said the beggar, the disease which afflicts me, is far different from what you conceive, and is such as you cannot discern: Yet it is an evil which hath crept over my whole body; it has passed through my very veins and marrow, in such a manner, that there is no member of my body that is able to work for my daily bread. This disease is by some called Idleness, and by others Sloth. The servant hearing this singular apology, left him in great anger, and returned to his master with the above account; but before the company could send again to make further inquiry after him, the beggar had very prudently withdrawn himself.

4. Action, we are assured, keeps the soul in constant health; but idleness corrupts and

rusts the mind ; for a man of great abilities, may, by negligence and idleness, become so mean and despicable, as to be an incumbrance to society, and a burden to himself. When the Roman historians described an extraordinary man, it generally entered into his character, as an essential, that he was *incredibili industriâ, diligentia singulari*,—"of incredible industry, of singular diligence and application." And Cato in Sallust informs the Senate, that it was not so much the arms, as the industry of their ancestors, which advanced the grandeur of Rome, and made her mistress of the world. Similar to which is the observation of Solomon (Prov. 22. 29.) "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean men."

5. A physiognomist, who professed, that, from the outward features of the face and habit of the body, he could assign the inward disposition of any man to a degree of certainty : One day seeing Socrates, pronounced him stupid, ignorant, effeminate, drunken, and addicted to unnatural vices. Upon this,

the Philosopher's friends were so irritated, that they threatened the man, and vowed to punish him as an impostor; as in all likelihood they would, had not Socrates restrained them by saying, "The man is no way mistaken: I should have been just the person he describes, had I not trained myself up by the precepts of Philosophy *."

6. Cæpio was adjudged to death for some offence, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar; but his servant in the night time carried him in a chest out of Rome, and brought him, by repeated nocturnal journies, from Ostia to the Laurentine fields, where was his father's villa. Afterwards, in order to be at further distance from danger, they took ship; but being forced back by a tempest, and driven on the coast of Naples, the servant was there apprehended, and brought before the Centurion, who put him to a strict examination: Every art, however, was ineffectual to

* See Proverbs, Chap. vii. ver. 6, &c. than which the inexperienced youth cannot, perhaps, meet with a more striking and beautiful admonition in all history, sacred or profane.

warp him from his duty ; nor could he be prevailed on either by bribes or menaces, to make any discovery of his master's retreat.

7. Micithus, a domestic of Anaxilaus, King of the Rhegini, was left by his dying master to govern his kingdom, and superintend his children during their minority. Throughout his viceroy-ship he behaved himself with such clemency and justice, that the people saw themselves happily placed under a person, whose quality was neither unfit to bear rule, nor too mean for the high post he occupied : And yet, when the children of Anaxilaus came of age, he immediately devolved the power into their hands, and at the same time transferred to them the treasures, which by his œconomy he had accumulated ; accounting himself merely as their guardian and trustee : While for his own part, content with a small pittance, he retired to Olympia, and there lived in the private enjoyment of respect, security, and the noble testimony of a faithful and upright conscience.

8. The following, we are informed, is a true relation of an event, which happened in a neighbouring state not many years ago. A jeweller, a man of good character and considerable wealth, having occasion, in the way of business, to travel at some distance from the place of his abode, took along with him a servant. He had with him some of his best jewels, and a large sum of money, to which his servant was likewise privy. The master having occasion to dismount on the road, the servant watched his opportunity, took a pistol from his master's saddle, and shot him dead on the spot. Then rifling him of his jewels and money, and hanging a large stone to his neck, he threw him into the nearest canal. With this booty, he made off to a distant part of the country, where he had reason to believe that neither he nor his master were known. There he began to trade, in a very low way at first, that his obscurity might screen him from observation; and in the course of many years seemed to rise up, by the natural progress of business, into wealth and consideration; so that his good fortune appeared at once the effect of industry, and

the reward of virtue. Of these he counterfeited the appearance so well, that he grew into great credit, married into a good family; and by laying out his hidden stores discreetly, as he saw occasion, and joining to all an universal affability, he was at length admitted to a share of the government of the town, and rose from one post to another, till at last he was chosen chief magistrate. In this office he maintained a fair character, and continued to fill it with no small applause, both as governor and judge; till, one day, as he sat on the bench with some of his brethren, a criminal was brought before him, who was accused of murdering his master. The evidence came out full; the jury brought in their verdict that the prisoner was guilty, and the whole assembly waited the sentence of the President of the Court (which he happened to be that day) in great suspense. Mean while he appeared to be in unusual disorder and agitation of mind; his colour changed often; At length he arose from his seat, and coming down from the bench, placed himself just by the unfortunate man at the bar, to the no small astonishment of all present. “ You

see before you (said he, addressing himself to those who had sat on the bench with him) a striking instance of the just awards of heaven; which, this day, after 30 years concealment, presents to you a greater criminal than the man just now found guilty." Then he made an ample confession of his heinous offence, with all its peculiar aggravations; "Nor can I, continued he, feel any relief from the agonies of an awaked conscience, but by requiring that justice be forthwith done against me in the most public and solemn manner." We may easily suppose the amazement of all, especially his fellow judges. They accordingly proceeded upon his confession to pass sentence upon him, and he died with all the symptoms of a penitent mind. See Dialogues on Education, vol. ii. p. 401.

+ 9. All the real pleasures and conveniencies of life (says a fine writer) lie in a narrow compass;

("Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.")

But it is the humour of mankind to be always looking forward, and straining after such as have got the start of them in wealth and honour. Nay, persons of an higher rank live in a kind of splendid poverty, and are perpetually wanting, because, instead of acquiescing in the solid pleasures of life, they endeavour to outvie each other in shadows and appearances. This ridiculous chace after imaginary pleasures cannot be sufficiently exposed, as it is the great source of those evils which generally undo a nation. Let a man's estate be what it will, he is a poor man, if he does not live within it; and naturally sets himself to sale to any one who can give him his price. When Pittacus, after the death of his brother, who had left him a good estate, was offered a great sum of money by the King of Lydia, he thanked him for his kindness, but told him he had already more by half than he knew what to do with. In short, content is equivalent to wealth, and, luxury to poverty; or, to give the thought a more agreeable turn, "Content is natural wealth," says Socrates; to which I shall add, Luxury is artificial poverty. I shall

therefore recommend to the consideration of those, who are always aiming at superfluous and imaginary enjoyments, and will not be at the trouble of contracting their desires, an excellent saying of Bion the Philosopher; namely, “ That no man has so much care, as he who endeavours after the most happiness.” Spectator, No. 574.

10. Scipio the younger, when only twenty-four years of age, was appointed by the Roman Republic to the command of the army against the Spaniards. Soon after the conquest of Carthage, the capital of the empire, his integrity and virtue were put to the following exemplary and ever memorable trial, related by the historians, ancient and modern, with universal applause. Being retired into his camp, some of his officers brought him a young virgin of such exquisite beauty, that she drew upon her the eyes and admiration of all. The young conqueror started from his seat with confusion and surprize; and like one thunder-struck, seemed to be robbed of that presence of mind and self-possession, so necessary in a general, and

for which Scipio was remarkably famous. In a few moments, having rallied his straggling spirits, he enquired of the beautiful captive, in the most civil and polite manner, concerning her country, birth and connections; and finding that she was betrothed to a Celtiberian prince named Allucius, he ordered both him and the captive's parents to be sent for. The Spanish prince no sooner appeared in his presence, than even before he spoke to the father and mother, Scipio took him aside, and, to remove the anxiety he might be in on account of the young lady, he addressed him in these words: " You and I are young, which admits my speaking to you with more liberty. Those who brought me your future spouse, assured me at the same time, that you loved her with extreme tenderness; and her beauty left me no room to doubt it. Upon which, reflecting, that if, like you, I had thought of making an engagement, and were not wholly engrossed with the affairs of my country, I should myself desire that so honourable and laudable a passion might find favour; I therefore think myself happy in the present conjuncture to do you service.

Though the fortune of war has made me your Master, I desire to be your Friend. Here is your wife; take her, and may the Gods bless you with her. One thing, however, I would have you be fully assured of, that she has been amongst us, as she would have been in the house of her father and mother. Far be it from Scipio to purchase a loose and momentary pleasure at the expence of virtue, honour, and the happiness of an honest man! No; I have kept her for you, in order to make you a present worthy of you, and of me. The only gratitude I require of you for this inestimable gift is, that you will be a friend to the Roman people." Allucius's heart was too full, to make him any answer; but, throwing himself at the General's feet, he wept aloud: The captive lady fell down in the same posture; and remained so, till the aged father, overwhelmed with transports of joy, burst into the following words: "Oh, divine Scipio! the Gods have given thee more than human virtue! Oh, glorious leader! Oh, wonderful youth! does not that obliged virgin give Thee, while thus praying to the Gods

for thy prosperity, rapture infinitely above all the transports thou couldst have reaped from the possession of her injured person !” Such was Scipio ; a soldier, a youth, an heathen ! nor was his virtue unrewarded. Allucius, charmed with such magnanimity, liberality and politeness, went into his own country, and published on all occasions the praises of his generous and humane victor ; crying out, “ that there was come into Spain a young hero, like the Gods ; who conquered all things less by the force of his arms, than by the charms of his virtue and the greatness of his beneficence.” Upon this report (continues the historian) all Celtiberia submitted to the Romans ; and Allucius returned in a shout to Scipio, at the head of 1400 chosen horse, to facilitate his future conquests : And to render the marks of his gratitude still more durable, Allucius caused the action above related to be engraven on a silver shield, which he presented to Scipio ; a present infinitely more inestimable and glorious, than all his treasures and triumphs. This shield, which Scipio carried with him when he returned to Rome, was lost in his passing the

Rhone, with part of the baggage : It continued in that river till the year 1665; when some fishermen found it; and it is said to be now in the cabinet of the French King.

II. It was a good piece of advice which Pythagoras gave his scholars, “ that every night, before they slept, they should examine what they had been doing that day, and so discover what actions were worthy of pursuit to-morrow, and what little vices were necessarily to be prevented from slipping unawares into a habit.” If you would be free from sin, fly temptation. He who does not endeavour to avoid the one, cannot expect Providence to defend him from the other. If the first sparks of vice were quenched, there would be no flame. For how can He kill, who dares not meditate revenge? Or He be an adulterer in act, who does not transgress in desire? How can He be perjured, who fears an oath? or defraud another, who dares not allow himself to covet? “ Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city.”

SERMON VII.

On Bad Company.

I CORINTHIANS XV. 33.

*Be not deceived: Evil communications corrupt
good manners.*

ALL nature loves and seeks society : Even the animals which are not of the most ferocious and untameable kind, delight to herd together, and feel a satisfaction in each other's presence. Man, peculiarly formed for society, has no joy in absolute solitude : Cut off from his fellow-creatures, so far is he from partaking of the pleasures of life, that he finds it extremely difficult to support his being. From society proceed all the refined comforts and superior enjoyments of life; and from society,—so very much mixed are all human blessings—proceed the greatest dangers and evils of life. 'Tis unpleasing to think, that from our chief advantages our greatest evils should flow ; but

this is not the only instance wherein the observation holds good. Alas ! my young friends, how I shudder for you, when recollecting the various perils you have to encounter, from assorting with that world, where you will find so many pleasing temptations to allure ; so many gilded snares to entrap ; where, perhaps, your own good dispositions and good inclinations will be made the foundation of your utter undoing ! Society you must, you will have : Good society is not less difficult to attain, than it is advantageous when attained : Evil society, as common as the air, is as blasting to the manners, as that air, when it bears on its noxious wings pestilence and disease. I would warn you from the latter : I would shew you, in conformity with the apostle's declaration, that " Evil communications corrupt good manners : " I would shew you, that they must necessarily and unavoidably do so. I would point out, on the other hand, the advantages of good company and conversation, and intreat you, by all you hold dear, as cautiously to fly the one, as you cultivate the other.

The fatal consequences of Bad Company have been known and confessed in all ages. The passage which St. Paul produces, is taken from a very ancient heathen Poet *; and it seems to have been one of those passages, which had gained universal assent, and was received as a maxim. Indeed, nothing is more true. For suppose a young person to set forward in the world, stored with the best principles, and unpolluted in virtue, there can be no question but those principles will be overthrown, and that virtue corrupted, if he communicates constantly, and by choice, with the vicious and loose. For, observe, we speak here of such company as we ourselves chuse. 'Tis very possible in our connections with the world, we may be obliged to converse with many, whose principles and practice are totally abhorrent from our own: But from these we are not in much danger. Our dislike and disapprobation of their manners will rather serve to improve our own. Our

* From Menander, according to St. Jerom, in whom the verse runs thus:

Φθείρουσιν ἡθὴν χρεῖσθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαί.

Theognis has a passage very similar.

peril lies in the company of such, as we voluntarily chuse for the associates of our freer hours ; not only because such choice evidently shews “ the turn and disposition of our minds, but because, from the very nature of social union, both we ourselves shall wish and study to be assimilated, and our companions will be zealous to have us assimilated to them.”

The choice of bad company, in the first place, evidently proves a bad disposition of mind. “ Tell me with whom you go,” says the proverb, “ and I will tell you what you are.” Free society is a matter of absolute choice, and, like another alliance, can never be contracted without consent of parties. Like universally assorts with like ; and it is as impossible for a virtuous mind, desirous of improvement, and studious to excel in duty, to take pleasure in the company of idle, ignorant, and vicious persons, as it is for the two greatest contraries in nature to unite. Where the sentiments, the conversation, the pursuits totally disagree, what but strife and contention can ensue ? Is it probable that persons thus dissentient will delight to asso-

S E R M O N VII. 213

ciate merely to jar and contend? Far different is the end and design of social intercourse. Indeed, the matter wants very little proof: The choice of bad companions is as infallible a proof of a bad mind, as the choice of bad, trifling and unimproving books would be of a depraved taste in the man who had a large and excellent library of the best and most improving authors around him, whence to make his election.

But I am wandering from my subject. The voluntary choice of bad company is so sure and sad a proof of a worthless mind, that all instruction will certainly prove fruitless: We think not therefore of such. We suppose You, my young friends, entering into life with good principles, and good dispositions; not voluntarily choosing, but accidentally thrown into bad company; an evil too much to be dreaded, from the prevalence of such company in this corrupted world, where the number of the vicious, it is to be feared, far exceeds that of the good; and where unfortunately, the good are often difficult of access, and very nice in their acquaintance;

while the vicious,—bold and assuming—are forward to court the young and the virtuous to associate with them ; anxious to corrupt their principles, and pollute their manners, as if numbers added strength to their cause, and their own shame and ruin would be less aggravated, the more they involved others in shame and ruin with them.

But be not you deceived, my young friends, by their glozing speeches, and loud promises of felicity : Neither trust to yourselves, or the imagined rectitude of your own intentions, as if you might pass safely amongst them. Who, though in full health and strength, would ever think of visiting the place where an epidemical and pestilential disorder ravaged all before it ? Believe me, the company of the vicious is more dangerous, as being more contagious ; and, however you may escape for the present, will undoubtedly in time corrupt, and work a fatal wound in your mind. For, tell me, upon what terms do you intend to converse with this evil company, into which you are unhappily fallen ? You must either approve or disapprove them.

If you approve them, there can be no doubt but you will imitate and resemble them. All hopes are then over ! If you disapprove them, and continue stedfast in that disapprobation, there will probably soon be an end of your society; and you may possibly come off safe. Though this is not so sure as you may think, particularly if you renew your visits, and are frequently found in the same society. For it is not in your power to tell what weight their arguments will have upon your mind; and be assured, they will use every argument which they conceive may be of weight: Since, as we just observed, the vicious and abandoned are very uneasy to have any person with whom they converse, better than themselves; and mighty zealous to make proselytes, that the virtue of others may not give pain to their own reflections. Indeed, as men of this class are generally ignorant enough, and sufficiently superficial in their understandings, you might perhaps with no great difficulty refute their arguments, and, on the footing of fair reasoning, shew the futility of all they advance: But they have a kind of reasoning of their own, a method of argumentation,

which will baffle all your logic, and confute at once all your arguments; and that is, “Laughter and ridicule.” A loud laugh, or a ridiculous jest; a little well-timed mockery, or despicable buffoonery, will serve at once to render all you would say insignificant, and to make you feel very uneasy in yourself, and very laughable in the sight of others. This may be called, the strong-hold of the vicious, and if you have fortitude enough to stand it,—which, believe me, is the case with very few of your fellow-creatures, for the human mind sustains persecution and pain much better than ridicule and scorn: Yet, if you have fortitude enough to bear it,—and can, with a manly resolution, despise and forsake such company, you are safe: You need fear no danger. But, as the contrary is much to be apprehended; as none of us can maintain too low an opinion of his own virtues, and consequently should avoid with the utinost caution every temptation; it will be much your best method never to trust yourself a second time in that company, where you find good principles and good manners banter’d and laugh’d at, and where this successful

engine of corruption, ridicule *, is play'd with all its force against virtue, religion, good manners, and your own profession of them.

But, suppose this not to be the case ; there are other reasons to fear, lest your morals should be corrupted, though at present you disapprove what you see wrong in your companions. It is common to us all, to behold with gradually-decreasing horror, as we grow familiariz'd to the sight, the objects which at first chill'd our blood. However you may disapprove, at first, the loose and profane language, and the more loose and criminal actions of your associates, be assured that you will find that disapprobation gradually diminish, as you accustom yourself more to hearing such language, and seeing such actions. The very allowance hereof, is a large stride in wrong. You have lost immediately, on this permission, the pure and undefiled guard of virtue ; and when once an avenue, however small, is open to vice, it is the nature of the insinuating monster to creep in

* See this matter more fully handled in the subsequent Sermons on "Ridicule." Vol. ii.

more and more, till she has worm'd herself into the very inmost heart.

Besides, the nature of friendly society is such, that, as we before remarked, it must necessarily have consent of parties. Meetings of this kind are designed for pleasure and satisfaction; and as every one, of a good disposition at least, finds in himself a desire to please, and to render himself agreeable to those with whom he converses, this very principle, amiable and excellent as it is in itself, will greatly increase your danger in bad company. Though many things may be said, proposed and done, which your best sentiments totally disapprove, yet, unwilling to disturb the good harmony of the social sett, reluctant to disgust and give offence, and fearing the stigmatizing appellation of "singularity," you will run the same length of riot with them; and, contrary to your better judgment, plunge perhaps into evils, which you may find cause to lament all the future days of your life. And further, my young friends,—O see how dangers thicken, and inconveniences press around, when once

you set your foot in unbidden paths !—If further you happen to possess a good degree of spirits and vivacity, think, when your blood flows with a quicker circulation, when all is cheerful, all is alive ; think, when the riot increases, and mirth mounts into madness ; O think, how easily you may be thrown entirely off your guard, and be carried by those spirits, which now no longer obey the rein of reason, into actions bad as the worst of those, whereof we frequently hear dissolute young persons boast !—vain and foolish, as if any honour could accrue, from seeming to be more vicious than men really are ; or from talking of crimes, which they have neither power nor hardiness to commit ! 'Tis certainly a sad proof of the corruption of the present times, that such persons are found amongst us : Such however there are among the young ; and if only amongst the Young, their youth and inexperience might haply plead some excuse. But such there are too amongst the old ; who not only presume, against the laws of decency and God, to speak of their filthy vices with relish ; but even to boast of vices, which they never

committed ; as if it were a credit to be more abominable than they in fact have made themselves. Blush, and hide your heads, ye sons of shame ! Unworthy the name of Christians, the heathen world will rise up against you in judgment, and condemn you.

I have hitherto reasoned, my young friends, upon principles common and congenial to our nature, such as operate almost invariably and irresistibly upon us ; and consequently, such as prove to a demonstration the certain danger there is, that “ Evil communications will corrupt good manners.” There is one other such principle in the human nature, which tends still more to confirm what I have advanced ; and that is our proneness to imitation. This is so general a principle, that from the cradle to the day of death, our life is almost all imitation. Few think or act for themselves, forming their opinions and manners upon the manners and opinions of others : And in social life we no sooner approve, than we are immediately led to imitate. Indeed, friendly society being formed upon a similarity of manners, such society

can never be maintained without that similarity be preserved. It cannot therefore be supposed, that if you converse with the vicious and immoral, you will be divested of this common principle of your nature : It is certain that this principle will have its influence upon you ; your thoughts, your speech, your actions will be formed upon the model of theirs : You will become one of them. Then, farewell all the pleasing hopes of your affectionate parents ; farewell all the delightful prospects of your felicity, wherewith they flattered themselves : Farewell all those comfortable expectations, which virtue and religion naturally form : and for yourselves, farewell the body in health ; the mind at peace ; the conscience serene and applauding. Farewell true tranquillity on earth ; farewell the hope of eternal tranquillity in Heaven !

These are the consequences of a corruption of manners, which will assuredly follow from the choice of bad company ; and therefore Charondas, an ancient lawgiver, wisely enacted a law with reference to this evil. “ As he conceived that the morals of the good were

sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance; that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself, and to extend its contagion even to the best disposed of our species: In order to prevent this mischief, he expressly enjoined that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons. He appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company, and laid an heavy fine on such as were convicted of it." This wise and salutary law was founded on the truest knowledge of human nature; which it is unquestionable, however pure and well disposed, bad company and bad example will for the most part be found sufficient to corrupt*.

In this case then, as well as in respect to vice in general, be assured, that your safety is in flight; in avoiding as much as possible every temptation, which may seduce into evil. Now entirely to effect this safety, there are three things which I would peculiarly re-

* See the Anecdotes, for a striking proof hereof, in the case of Prince Eugene of Soissons, p. 230.

commend : The FIRST is, “ to avoid, with the nicest caution, all society with the bad.” If by accident thrown into their company, maintain your decency and dignity with all possible firmness ; but comply not with any of their solicitations : Approach not to any the least intimacy ; but on the first occasion make your retreat, nor enter into their assembly again.

And, as the best antidote against such society, as one of the surest methods to render it disgusting, and to shew it in its own true and despicable colours ; let me advise you, SECONDLY, “ to seek and to cultivate with all your power the society of the virtuous and the good :” Of those who are superior to you, rather than those beneath you. A love of low company is certain ruin ! You will find a serenity and satisfaction in the converse of the worthy, always innocent, agreeable and improving, which you will never find in the obstreperous mirth and loose riot of the dissolute and profane. You will find yourself stimulated to higher degrees of virtue, the more you are familiar with the virtuous ; and consequently

you will find your happiness daily increase, in proportion as your virtue increases: For “Virtue is happiness.”

But, besides a general correspondence with the virtuous, endeavour if possible to cultivate a pure disinterested friendship with one of similar dispositions, and similar good intentions with yourself*. From a friendship founded in true virtue and religion, you will reap, not only the most delicate pleasure which the human soul can feel, but, in many respects, the highest advantages which the human life can experience.

A celebrated Heathen writer † mentioning the use which friends are of to us, in every part of life, remarks the benefit which young men find from them, to be, that “they keep them in their duty.” Certainly nothing more strong or more important could be urged in

* Facillimè et in optimam partem cognoscuntur adolescentes, qui se ad claros at sapientes viros, bene consulentes reipublicæ, contulerunt: quibuscum si frequentes sunt, opinionem afferunt populo, eorum fore se similes, quos sibi ipsi delegerunt ad imitandum. *Cicer. de Offic. lib. ii. 13.* See Vol. iii. p. 107.

† Aristotle.

behalf of friendship. To keep us stedfast in our duty, is the best office which can be done for us: a virtuous friend can and will keep us so stedfast; surely then, above all things, it should be our study to cultivate virtuous friendship.

But, avoiding the company of the bad, and solicitously cultivating that of the good, you must take care, Thirdly, as the most important point of all, “to preserve in your minds, a deep sense of the importance, and a high relish of the comforts of religion:”—Of that religion, which exhorts not only to avoid evil, but every the least appearance of it: That religion, which, maintained in all its life and power upon the soul, by regular and uniform application to all the means of grace, will serve to render the company and conversation of the vicious so disgusting and detestable, that the mind would prefer, under the happy impressions of it, perpetual solitude in the wildest desert, rather than the society of those whose every word is a wound to the chaste and virtuous ear; whose every action is as a poignard to the good and religious heart.

No, my young friends ! while the religion of Christ has its due influence upon your souls ; while you direct your thoughts and guide your actions by the pure and blessed precepts of the gospel ; you have no need to fear the loss of the relish of that Virtue, the nice feelings of that tender Conscience, which will render vice odious, and goodness alone pleasing to you. Shew yourselves only firm and well-grounded in your principles ; dare but to be singular a while, and to confront the little scoffs and ridicule of despicable sneerers ; and, be assured, your company will become, to your great felicity, as unpleasing to the vicious, as theirs can be to you. As a living reproach to their infamous proceedings, they will not care how little they see or know of you ; and finding you like a rock amidst the waves, firm and secure against all their noisy attacks ; while they cannot refuse you the silent approbation and involuntary homage of their hearts, they will leave you to pursue your happy and well-chosen course of life. A course which will infallibly lead you to true contentment and inward peace : Which will enable you, perhaps, hereafter to give relief

and consolation to many of those, who, to their own ruin, have pursued a different course; but which will certainly procure you the honour and esteem of your fellow-creatures, and the future applause of a just and benevolent Redeemer. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES,

On the Subject of Bad Company.

I. “ Art thou any kind of tree?” (said an eastern Sage to a lump of odoriferous earth, which he picked up in a grove) “ Thou charmest me with thy perfume?”—It answered him, “ I am only a vile piece of earth; but I dwelt for some time with the rose.” One of our Poets has prettily conveyed this sentiment, by observing,

“ Who can travel through th’ Arabian groves,
And not bear thence some fragrance?”

2. The divine mercy had inspired a vicious man to request admission into a society of Sages, whose morals were holy and pure. He obtained what he earnestly desired: The constant example of their virtues deeply affected him. He could not be taught a better lesson.

He made no delay to imitate them, and to relinquish his former ill habits. He became just, sober, patient, laborious, beneficent, amiable. His good works could not be contradicted: But, odious Motives were attributed to them; and though his actions were commended, his person was not beloved or esteemed. In short, most people seemed inclined to pass their judgment upon him, from what he had been, but not from what he was. This injustice pierced him with sorrow: He shed tears in the bosom of an old and venerable friend, whom he knew to be just and humane. "My son," said the Sage to him, "Thou art of more worth even than thy Reputation: Give God thanks for it. Happy is the man, who can say, "My enemies and my rivals censure in me the vices, which I no longer retain." What signifies it, if thou art but good, that others persecute thee as a wicked man? Hast thou not for thy consolation, two clear-sighted witnesses of thy actions, GOD, and thine own conscience?"

3. The excellent Bishop Taylor, in one of his volumes, has the following remark: "As

those creatures," says he, "that live among the snows of the mountains turn white * with their food, and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses; so our souls may be transformed into the similitude and union of Christ, by our perpetual feeding on him, and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purity." Thus too the royal poet observes, with respect to our associates in life: "With the holy, thou shalt be holy, and with a perfect man, thou shalt be perfect: With the clean, thou shalt be clean, and with the froward, thou shalt learn frowardness."

4. Gallus Vibius, we are informed, was in the earlier part of life a man of great eloquence, yet in a course of time he fell into a state of as great madness; which seized on him not so much by accident, as by his own affectation, having so long mimically imitated madmen, that he became frantic himself. And Tully confessed that whilst he laughed at one Hircus, a very ridiculous

* See Smollet's "View of all Nations," Vol. i. p. 32, 80, and 195, for some curious facts on this head.

fellow, he almost became the same kind of person: "Dum illum rideo, pene factus sum ille."

5. It was an ancient custom of the Ethiopians (says Diodorus Siculus) that if the King by any cause or accident was maimed in his limbs, his domestics and familiar friends would voluntarily weaken themselves in those members; thinking it uncomely for them to walk upright, while their King halted, or if he had but one eye, that they should have perfect sight. Thus too, when their monarch died, his particular friends used to kill themselves; as if supposing such a period of their own existence honourable, and a testimony of undissembled friendship. How many such self-sacrificers are to be found in the world, devoting themselves as wildly to ruin, through false complaisance, and a vicious deference to the rank and influence of others!

6. The following is related by a writer of undoubted reputation: Speaking of Prince Eugene of Soissons, he observes, "All those qualifications and endowments that can procure love and esteem, shone conspicuous in

this young Prince. A graceful person, the most engaging affability and sweetness of temper, a quick understanding, an heroic ardour, a skill in the sciences, and other parts of polite literature (which was the more extraordinary in a Prince then but 15 years of age) united to justify the exalted hopes conceived of him. He shewed a strong inclination to a military life, and at that early period was already inuring himself to it; so that, commonly, a bare board served him for a pillow. The King had taken the greatest care of his education, and suffered him to be ignorant of no branch of knowledge, which might contribute to his future advancement. To keep him out of the way of public diversions, and other dissipations, he resided at a distance from court, having apartments at the riding academy: There he gave himself up to the study of the sciences, with such intenseness and application, that he scarce came to court once in a week, nor appeared at any publick diversions. The apartments of the Prince and his excellent tutor were full of a philosophical apparatus, and mathematical instruments; of the con-

struction and use of which the Prince had gained a perfect knowledge, as it were by way of diversion. Nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to explain every thing to strangers of curiosity who happened to visit him. The young Prince allowed himself no other amusements, but such as improve, as well as divert the mind; and was as fond of mathematical problems, and philosophical experiments, as too many young gentlemen are of such diversions, as tend to alienate their minds from any intense application, and render them unable to bear the least hardship."

"How great things were to be expected from a Prince of such endowments! so disposed to the worthiest pursuits, so closely applying himself to them, making so happy a progress in them.—Alas! every pleasing expectation formed of him proved in the event vain! Bad companions insinuated themselves into his good esteem; bad examples found him unable to withstand them; when the vicious were his companions, their manners were no longer his abhorrence: By

affociating with them, he soon became as abandoned as the worst of them; and in a few years, having lost his virtue, unhappily lost his life *." There cannot be a stronger or more melancholy proof of the fatal influence which bad company and bad examples have over even the best cultivated and best disposed minds. How then can others expect to avoid the contagion, though ever so carefully informed and well inclined, if they are hardy enough to venture in the midst of it; even when they see before their eyes a youth thus well and nobly trained, blasted at once, and all his fair blossoms withering, or ere they were ripened into the promised fruit?

7. The learned and pious Sir Matthew Hale, when a youth, was too much addicted to the society of some vicious people, which he did not break off, till an alarming accident drove him from it. Being invited with some other young students, to a merry-making out of town, one of them during the carouse called for so much wine, that notwithstand-

* See the Preface to Dean Bolton's Tracts,

struction and use of which the Prince had gained a perfect knowledge, as it were by way of diversion. Nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to explain every thing to strangers of curiosity who happened to visit him. The young Prince allowed himself no other amusements, but such as improve, as well as divert the mind; and was as fond of mathematical problems, and philosophical experiments, as too many young gentlemen are of such diversions, as tend to alienate their minds from any intense application, and render them unable to bear the least hardship."

"How great things were to be expected from a Prince of such endowments! so disposed to the worthiest pursuits, so closely applying himself to them, making so happy a progress in them.—Alas! every pleasing expectation formed of him proved in the event vain! Bad companions insinuated themselves into his good esteem; bad examples found him unable to withstand them; when the vicious were his companions, their manners were no longer his abhorrence: By

affociating with them, he soon became as abandoned as the worst of them; and in a few years, having lost his virtue, unhappily lost his life *." There cannot be a stronger or more melancholy proof of the fatal influence which bad company and bad examples have over even the best cultivated and best disposed minds. How then can others expect to avoid the contagion, though ever so carefully informed and well inclined, if they are hardy enough to venture in the midst of it; even when they see before their eyes a youth thus well and nobly trained, blasted at once, and all his fair blossoms withering, or ere they were ripened into the promised fruit?

7. The learned and pious Sir Matthew Hale, when a youth, was too much addicted to the society of some vicious people, which he did not break off, till an alarming accident drove him from it. Being invited with some other young students, to a merry-making out of town, one of them during the carouse called for so much wine, that notwithstand-

* See the Preface to Dean Bolton's Tracts.

ing all Mr. Hale could do to prevent it, he went on in his excess, till he fell down as dead before them. All present were not a little terrified, and did all they could to bring him to himself again: This particularly affected Mr. Hale, who went into another room, and shutting the door, fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly to God, both for his friend, that he might again be restored to life; and that himself might be forgiven for having countenanced such excesses. Moreover, he vowed to God, that he would never again keep company in that manner, nor drink another health while he lived. His friend recovered, and Mr. Hale most religiously observed his vow, till his dying day. It was this great man's resolution, drawn up by him in writing for his own private use, with regard to COMPANY (among other articles of conduct) to "do good to them; to use God's name reverently, while with them: to beware of leaving an ill example among them; and to receive good from them, if they were more knowing than himself." See his life, by Bishop Burnett.

8. That ever-memorable instance of God's mercy, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, was in early life always much given to riot and licentiousness. During his travels, however, and those sciences at sea in which he was soon after engaged, his mind being better occupied, he had so entirely laid down his former intemperance, that at his return, we are informed, he hated nothing more. But falling again into company that loved those excesses, he was, though not without difficulty, and by many steps, brought back to it, and that in a shocking degree: For the natural glow of his fancy being enflamed by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many, to be the more diverted by his humour, were ever studying to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance; and this at length so entirely subdued him, that (as he told Dr. Burnett his historian) for five years together he was continually drunk: Not indeed all the while under the visible effect of it; but his blood was so inflamed, that he was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly master of himself. This led him to say and do many wild and unaccountable things; and

by this, he said, he had broken the firm constitution of his health, which once seemed so strong, that nothing was too hard for it; and he suffered so much in his reputation, that he almost despaired to recover it. This course of life, however, was not always equally pleasant to him. He had often sad intervals of severe reflection upon it; and though at that time he had not these awakened in him from any deep principle of religion, yet the horror which Nature excited in him, (especially in some sicknesses) made him too easy to receive those ill and sceptical principles, with which others endeavoured to possess him; so that he was soon brought to set himself to secure and fortify his mind against religion, by dispossessing himself all he could of the belief or apprehensions of it. To complete his ruin, the licentiousness of his temper, with the briskness of his wit, disposed him to love the conversation of those, who divided their time between lewd actions and irregular mirth: And thus he came at last to bend his wit, and direct his studies and endeavours to support and strengthen those evil principles both in himself and others. At

length, God was pleased in a very striking manner to bring him, by pain and sorrow and strong conviction, to repentance; during the course of which, he said to Bishop Burnett, "In what a condition shall I be, if I relapse after all this?"—but added, "He trusted in the grace and goodness of God, and was resolved to avoid all those temptations, that course of life, and company, that were so likely to ensnare him; and he desired to live on no other account, but that he might, by the change of his manners, some way take off the high scandal his former behaviour had given."—This the dying penitent uttered in various terms to his spiritual friend; with other expressions to some of his former companions, which well became his state: giving them a charge to publish any thing concerning his conversion, which might be a means to reclaim others; "and praying God, that as his life had done much hurt, so his death might do some good."

We should do well always to carry about us a sense of such events; together with that

excellent advice of Saint Bernard, which is one of the great rules for propriety and self-government in life; "*Inde lætari in adolescentiâ, unde in senectute non pœniteat:*" "To rejoice and take pleasure in those things or persons, when young, which we shall not repent of in the wintry season of old age;" —for though a man be ever so clear and unblameable himself, yet by frequenting company who are tainted either in mind or manners, he will necessarily contract some pollution from them.

9. When Marius was sent against the Cimbri, his soldiers durst not look the enemy in the face; their gigantic stature and barbarous aspect awed the Roman bravery. But when they had beheld these same barbarous Germans three days together from the camp, their spirits revived, their congealed courage began to circulate through every vein; they not only fought, but overcame the foe they had so lately dreaded. Reverse the medal, and apply it to those connections in which the young and inexperienced are daily enlisted to their hurt;—the

effect is obvious and striking. A youth educated in the principles of christianity, cannot at first think of the breach of a commandment, without trembling and inward convulsion: But then he slides into seemingly trivial commissions. The associates of his unguarded hours strew every pitfall of pleasure with flowers. At first, a damp arises over his mind, and he almost inclines to doubt there is some error in his progress. He becomes uneasy for a while; yet, urged by example, continues his course, and at length conscience begins to slumber; its reproaches are faint, its stings scarce perceptible; custom blunts the edge of reflection, and, when once arrived at this pitch of insensibility, he hesitates not at many impieties, which before were abhorrent to his nature. So true is that ancient aphorism, "*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*;" No one becomes very wicked on a sudden. Negligence and distrust first unite to weaken the sacred sanction of God's commands, before men can presume to break them.

10. Eusebius was not one of those plodders, who seem to disband all society, and to

forswear conversation; who place Virtue in Sourness, and confound Piety with Spleen: No; he was free, easy, and cheerful, and never refused to partake of those festivities, which recreate the mind and refresh the body, without prejudice to the conscience. This was his *ne plus ultra*, and he thought it a noble and an ample field; since here he could enjoy every gratification suited to a rational being, and not unworthy his understanding and his nature. “But, to pawn Innocence for Pleasure (said he) as many do, is to overrate the one, and to undervalue the other. To laugh whilst we sin, is, in some sort, to renew the barbarous cruelty of Nero, who is reported to have played while Rome burned; or the foolish temerity of the Indian Philosopher, who sung on the funeral pile just ready to consume him.” Disgusted therefore at such society, and still more at follies which he could neither endure or correct; he lamented in silent indignation, to behold Christians leading the lives of the lowest Pagans, and profaning the best religion with the foulest crimes.—“What pleasure (would he say) can any Christian take in those places,

where Vice rides in triumph, and Virtue groans in a dungeon? Where Goodness and Decency lie under Contempt, and Irregularity receives applause? Where the best actions are lampooned, and the worst glozed over or deified by their short-sighted votaries?"—This consideration so weaned Eusebius from the love of the world, that he withdrew into the country, and there allied all the qualities of a Gentleman so handsomely with the duties of a Christian, that it was hard to judge whether his behaviour was more genteel, or more religious. He was wont to say, "Those lie under a great mistake, who fancy that Virtue is an enemy to Good-breeding; that a man must turn off Civility to become a Saint; and exclude himself from the society of all Men, in order to keep up a correspondence with his God. No (continued he) Christianity makes men honest, indeed, but it does not make them Clowns; it forbids Grimace, but not Sincerity; it puts a mean between Foppishness and Rusticity, and forbids us to shew no breeding, by affecting to shew too much. Virtue smooths the brow as well as the conscience, and

knows how to temper innocent mirth with a .
seasonable reservedness and decorum. So
that we may, if we so incline, keep up to
the height of our duty to God, without
dropping our obligations to good neighbour-
hood, and abandoning the comforts of
society."

S E R M O N VIII.

On Bad Books.

ACTS xix. 19, 20.

Many also of them who used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: And they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed!

THE only true happiness of human life consists in a virtuous and religious conduct, formed upon virtuous and religious principles. The greatest enemies we can have, and the most formidable temptations we can encounter, are those which tend to deprive us of this felicity, either by corrupting those principles, or causing us to decline from that conduct.

It was on this account, my young friends, that I endeavoured to set forth so fully in my last, the fatal consequences of Bad Company to both, to shew you, in agreement with

Saint Paul's declaration, that there is a necessary and unavoidable connection between evil communications and a depravity of manners.

The word made use of by the apostle, and rendered "Communications*," is of extensive import: It may imply, not only Conversation, but Reading also; and consequently leads us to another mode of evil communication, by which good morals are as much prejudiced, as by bad company. For it is certain, that the reading of corrupt, irreligious and profane Books, tends, in an especial manner, to pervert the judgment, to inflame the passions, and pollute the mind.

Willing, therefore, to point out every danger You have to encounter in your journey through life, I propose to offer a few observations, and to give you some necessary cautions respecting "Bad Books." The pernicious effects of these were so palpable to the Ephesian Converts mentioned in the text, that they judged rightly, no other method

* *Ὁμιλίας*. See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon.

could testify the sincerity of their conversion, than the total destruction of them : And though the value of what they burned was great,—upon the lowest calculation exceeding two thousand pounds *,—yet they chose to annihilate so much property, rather than, by selling these books, to propagate infamy, and communicate the knowledge of those vile practices which they taught. A noble example of real and disinterested repentance; the seal and proof of which, is always the putting away and avoiding every occasion of sin. Nor can the value of any thing, however great, be in any degree comparable with the price of truth, and the practice of virtue.

The books which the Ephesians burned were such as instructed them in the “curious arts” of sorcery and magic, for which that city was famous; insomuch, that those arts were even proverbially called “Ephesian Letters.” The professors of these arts, were a set of infamous and despicable miscreants, who pretended to communications with

* See Calmet, Prideaux, Arbuthnot, &c.—and Henry on the place.

infernal spirits, and were extremely instrumental, by their diabolical persuasions, to disurb the peace, and deprave the morals of the people.

The light of Christianity has dispelled the darkness and ignorance of these pretended arts; and there are not at present any compositions more harmless than those which treat of this subject. From books of this kind, neither young or old are in any danger. Those which are to be dreaded; by which the mischief is done, and which unhappily abound amongst us, are books of irreligion, and of immorality; writings, whose sorcery is more bewitching, and whose magic is infinitely more fatal: for they attempt to corrupt either our Principles or our Practice.

I shall consider them under these two heads; adding some short strictures on Books of Enthusiasm. And first, with respect to books which attempt to influence and corrupt your "Religious Principles," be advised, my young friends, never to take them

✓

into your hands, or to concern yourselves with them. Much of your happiness in life depends upon the steadfastness of your religious principles. I suppose you, by the care and instruction of your parents and pastors, well grounded in these, and sufficiently able to give, when a proper occasion demands, a satisfactory account of the hope that is in you. If this be the case, what possible end can it answer, for you to perplex yourselves with those subtle distinctions, and nice objections, which enemies to the Gospel of Christ have been so solicitous to raise? Lay it down as an infallible truth, that both the œconomy of nature and of grace is liable to a variety of seeming objections, which, with our limited and narrow faculties, we can never hope totally to remove. And consider, with respect to "Revelation" in particular, that the very term implies a discovery of something, to which the unaided human mind was inadequate: And therefore it is most reasonable to suppose, that the human mind must be inadequate to the full comprehension of what that revelation contains. Certainly,

it is the province of reason to examine the evidences of a revelation : But when once those evidences have fully approved themselves, Reason immediately submits herself to the guidance of humility and faith.

Do not imagine that I am pleading for a blind deference to opinions, or that I would recommend to you an implicit submission to established modes of faith, without proper and deliberate examination. This is a principle most abhorrent to truth, and to all improvement in knowledge ; a principle, which makes a man a Mahometan at Mecca, with just as good reason, as he is a Christian at London. No ; the religion of Jesus Christ expects and solicits examination : Nor is it possible for any one to be a Christian, in the proper sense of the word, without such examination ; without a knowledge of the evidences upon which he grounds his faith. And I am thoroughly persuaded, that one very pregnant source at least, of the lukewarmness and indifference discernible in the lives of so many professing christians, as well

as of the facility wherewith others fall a prey to popish superstition, infidelity, and enthusiasm, is a want of this thorough examination; is an unacquaintedness with the solid grounds and reasons of their belief. Look at the lives of those who first embraced the religion of Jesus: See how glowing was their zeal; how vigorous their piety; how extensive their benevolence!—The religion of Jesus is still the same: The succours of divine grace are equally open and operative: But here lies the great difference: They became Christians by choice; We are born and made such, without any choice of our own. They took not up their religion, but on the strongest conviction of its truth: We profess that religion, because we happen to be born of parents who professed it, and who, in early infancy, baptized us into it;—and who perhaps, further, thought it necessary just to teach us a little Catechism by rote, and then left us to shift for our religious principles as well as we could.

Let me believe, and let me hope, my young friends, that Your parents and instructors

have done more for you; that they have shewn you the evidences of the christian faith, and have enabled you to oppose and confute those subtle arguments which Infidels and Deists may throw in your way. If they have not, strengthen yourselves by the perusal of some one or other of those many excellent performances, which the advocates for Christianity have compiled in proof of its divine original. Consider the train of evidence at large; and upon the subject of any material objections, either read such writers as are of allowed and universal character, or consult such persons of ingenuity and candour, as you think are able, and you may be assured will be ready, to remove your scruples, and convince your mind. Thus fortified and established in the truth (for I am thoroughly satisfied, that the consequence of such a serious and sincere inquiry will be an establishment in the truth) make it your chief, your only care to fulfil the precepts of the gospel; not to dispute about its divinity, or to attend to objections which may possibly be urged against it. Our Saviour hath promised that "they who do his will, shall know of

the doctrine whether it be of God." Let it be your labour to gain increase in such knowledge by this life of obedience: And for the rest, pass over in neglect whatever Deists and Infidels may urge; nor make so idle a waste of time, or perhaps so sad a shipwreck of your mind's quiet and peace, as to lose your hours in perusing their subtle and perplexing performances. Their grand business is to embarrass and confuse; and it is often enough for them, if they cannot subvert, to render arguments dark and doubtful: Unrestrained by any motives of religion or decency, they fear not to speak bold things with confidence, and to pronounce gross falsehoods, even against their God: Though answered a thousand times, they hesitate not to urge and re-urge the same stale objections, and have the temerity to repeat the blasphemies afresh, whereof their predecessors have been fully convicted: For, it seems, in the cause of infidelity, want of novelty is no reproach, nor the repetition of profaneness any shame; as its fautors dread not the immediate vengeance of God, while allowed by the civil arm to affront him with impu-

nity. And God forbid, that the civil arm should interfere in this case! God forbid, that in a land of liberty, any man should be precluded from the free delivery of his sentiments! for though many and great evils unquestionably arise from hence, yet it is as unquestionable that the good preponderates; and I think it is clear to a demonstration, that however individuals may have been hurt, the cause of Christianity in general has been advanced and benefited by opposition, and the opposition of Infidels in particular.

This it were easy to shew; as well as how the Infidels of ancient and modern times have shifted the argument*; diametrically opposing and confuting each other;—and this perhaps we may take some future occasion to shew: But for You, my young friends, let it suffice, to urge against all their objections, that Christianity has now been professed for near 2000 years; that it has withstood all the attacks which persecution and sophistry, in their most varied forms, could make against it; that it is allowed on all hands to be a

* See Gerhard's excellent Dissertations,

most benevolent religion, calculated in the best manner for the improvement of morals, and the felicity of men; that if it were to be taken from you, it would be most difficult to supply its place with any thing at all comparable; that if its evidences could be subverted, with them all historical evidence, and all the faith of ancient times must fall; and that, in short, upon the presumption of the falsehood and imposture of Christianity, perfect doubt and scepticism must ensue, and the only system in which a man could take shelter would be downright Materialism; would be in the gloomy disbelief of a providence here, and of an immortality hereafter!

In the view of these consequences, what advantages can you discern to yourselves, from espousing the cause of infidelity? Certainly none; and therefore, you can have no temptation to peruse the works of those, who are the patrons and teachers of infidelity. Books of this kind, you will carefully avoid, not only as extremely trifling, but as likely to prove extremely pernicious: Trifling, because if their arguments have no effect, they will

consume your important moments without the least improvement : Pernicious, because if their arguments have their effect, they will deprive you of the best hopes which human creatures can enjoy ; and will entirely “ corrupt your morals,” which, indeed, for the most part, is the grand foundation and mystery of all infidelity.

But books of infidelity, are not those alone which are to be dreaded, as the “ corrupters of morals.” There are books whose immediate and direct tendency it is, to serve the cause of Immorality, and to be the foul vehicles of indecency, obscenity, and pollution. These are a kind of writings so impure and defiling, that it is scarcely possible to speak of them without incurring some degree of defilement ;—for who can touch pitch and be clean ? And they are so prejudicial and obnoxious to all purity of mind, that the least share of virtue, I must believe, will be sufficient to render them odious and disgusting. Nor will you, if you have the least regard for religion, the least reverence for yourselves, ever be persuaded to degrade your nature so

much, as to peruse such infamous and detestable performances.

You will find, my young friends, the combat with your passions sufficiently strong: You will find that every method you can use to keep those passions in subjection will be requisite: But if you allow yourselves in the use of any thing which serves to inflame and arouse those passions, how can you ever expect a victory over them? And, believe me, books of that immoral sort, from the use of which I am dissuading you, are inflammatory to a high degree, and the more to be dreaded, as some of them present their poison under a specious covering, and gild with seeming beauty the horrid bait which they lay for your virtue.

It is indeed a melancholy reflection, that any such books should be extant amongst us; 'tis melancholy to think that any of the human species should have so far lost all sense of shame, all feelings of conscience, as to sit down deliberately, and compile a work, intirely in the cause of Vice and Immorality;

a work, which, for aught they know, may serve to pollute the minds of millions, and propagate contagion and iniquity through generations yet unborn: Living and spreading its baneful effects long after the unhappy hand, which wrote it, is moulder'd into dust; but perhaps, not so long as the unhappy Mind, which composed it, is paying the due punishment for its offence in the doleful regions of futurity. Good God! if the authors of such writings could feel this reflection; if they would consider the numberless youths, whose minds may be blasted by their evil efforts; if they would consider, that works of this kind once made public, are impossible to be recalled; that however they may themselves repent of the evil, it is yet of such a nature, as can never be repaired! for which no restitution can ever be made!—If men would a moment attend to this reflection, certainly we should hear no more of such contaminating works; certainly some of those who have taken the Devil's office, and turned corrupters of our youth, in the present day, would endeavour to be as exemplary in their repentance, as they have

been notorious and noxious by their shameful publications.

It is a striking observation made by one of the fathers, that “as the authors of good books may hope to find their future crown in glory brightened by the degree of wisdom and virtue, which their writings impart thro’ successive generations; so the writers of bad ones may well dread an increase of punishment in the future world, proportionate to the pollution they spread, and the ill effects which their writings shall produce, so long as they continue to be read *.”

There cannot be a more awakening example to persons who are any ways concerned in writings of this kind, than that unhappy, witty, and profligate nobleman, whose repentance, it is to be feared, however advantageous and honourable to himself, will never be sufficient to counterbalance the continued ill-effects of his loose and filthy writings. And it is remarkable, that upon his death-

* See Parsons’s Christian Directory, translated by Dr. Stanhope, p. 147.

bed, this reflection gave him the keenest uneasiness: On which account he was extremely anxious to have all his profane and lewd pieces burned, as well as to call in, if possible,—but alas! that was impossible—all the copies of them which had been unhappily dispersed. Giving those persons who were nearest to him a strict charge to do so; and “Acknowledging, with a sincere contrition, that those works were only fit to promote Vice and Immorality: That by them he had most highly offended God, and shamed and blasphemed that holy religion into which he had been baptized *.”

I cannot conclude this head, without expressing my concern for, and bearing my testimony at least, against another species of corruption, eminently fatal to the minds of our people in general, and of our youth in particular: I mean the loose and obscene Prints and Pictures, which, to the great scandal of good manners and religion, are not only engraved and sold, but publickly

* See Bishop Burnett's account of the death, &c. of the Earl of Rochester, and the Anecdotes, p. 235.

exposed in the most frequented parts of the metropolis. There are in this Christian land, men, that have been baptized too, and call themselves Christians; who yet, lamentable to think! start not at any profession or mode of gain; and heed not, if they can clothe their own backs, by what beastly vices they are supported, or by what destructive methods they procure their foul maintenance.

I wonder not at these: Dead to shame, they are dead to virtue: But I wonder at those, who, placed in superior stations by the providence of God, are made the guardians of a people's liberty and virtue; who, dignified with the honour of Magistracy, possess the highest and most sacred trust; a trust, which, certainly, as much respects the morals, as the properties of the people; and for their regard to, or neglect of the one no less than the other, they must certainly render an account to Him, whose vicegerents they are. And in the present instance, the laws have amply provided. But if the Magistrates sleep, and the laws have no execution, who can wonder that the people trample on and

despise them? Who can wonder that the morals of the people grow daily more and more defiled? Who can wonder that such a Magistracy grows contemptible, while even Royalty itself is not respected; and while such prints as we have hinted at, even make their vile obscenity a shameful vehicle for daring treason!

Turn we from the unpleasing prospect. Our hopes are in you, my young friends; our wish is to preserve your virtue unpolled, that so you may become public, as well as private blessings. For this purpose, let me exhort, let me advise, let me beseech You, never to contemplate, much less to purchase or possess any of those seducing and lascivious representations, which you will find the panders and patrons of Vice so solicitous to recommend to your notice and attention. Keep in your view, as much as possible, the fair and spotless forms of Virtue and Religion, and you will hold Obscenity and Immorality, in their just degree of abhorrence; as monsters which, like Milton's Sin, however enchanting they may seem at the first

view, are foul serpents in the end, full of poison, and the mothers of Death.

There is a third species of writings which are, in some respects, as pernicious as either of the foregoing, and consequently as carefully to be avoided. I mean writings of the Enthusiastic kind; which are frequently found as prejudicial to the mind's repose, and to the proper conduct of life, as books of Irreligion, or Immorality. But here you must take great care not to stigmatize with the name of Enthusiasm works of genuine piety and pure religion. 'Tis a common error in the present times: Men sit so loose to religion, that whatever has an high appearance of it, in self-justification they brand with the name of Enthusiasm. You will be wiser, my young friends; for I hope your conduct will be too blameless and exemplary to need any such poor and delusive evasions, such miserable self-deceit. Nevertheless, there is a real and a very essential difference between Religion and Enthusiasm *. The one as

* See a Sermon, entitled, "Cautions against Methodism; or, Unity recommended." Printed for FADEN.

gentle, amiable, and beneficial, as the other is wild, offensive, and hurtful. To avoid the latter, so far as reading is concerned, let me give you one rule: "Make it your fixed practice never to read any books of piety and devotion, but such as are written by men of known and established characters; such as have the stamp of merit, and are of allowed reputation." You can run no hazard from the perusal of these; and it is very pleasing to think that we have a great variety of them. Our language abounds with a larger number of writings on all the branches and topics of religion, than perhaps any other; so that there is choice sufficient: And certainly, in this case, it would be very simple to waste your time in the perusal of writers of doubtful credit, and which perhaps may warp your sentiments, and do infinite prejudice to your minds, when you may employ that time much more to your emolument, in the perusal of authors well approved, capable of instructing, edifying, comforting; and by which, you will be sure neither to be deceived nor misled.

These then, my young friends, are the three kinds of Books, which, anxious for your perseverance in virtue, I would earnestly wish you never to handle;—Books of Infidelity, Immorality, and Enthusiasm. Would to God that all of this kind, like the Books of magic at Ephesus, were brought together and burned! We might then hope that the word of God would more grow and prevail. For, doubtless, to this growth they are amongst the strongest obstacles: However, as this is rather to be wished than expected; as Books of this kind, in the present corrupt state of things, will continue to abound; it must be your care, your most cautious endeavour, to preserve your minds pure from their pollution, by never suffering them at all to engross your time and attention. It is with Reading, my young friends, as with Company; nothing more obnoxious than bad, nothing more advantageous than good: And as in the case of Company we advised you to avoid the contagion of evil, by seeking as much as possible the happy protection of good; so, with respect to Reading (which we have heretofore so largely recommended, and which

affords so fine a fund of pleasure and profit) let it be your study to lay out your leisure hours in such as is useful and instructive, and you will have the less propensity for such as is trifling and hurtful.

The English language abounds with excellent writers, not in divinity only, but in every branch of useful and entertaining science: You will reap, from an attention to such authors, not only an increase of Wisdom, but also of Virtue, her fair companion; and by these will be introduced to an acquaintance with such Happiness, as Vice never knew, as all the gayest scenes of Immorality could never afford.

Be assured, all your felicity in this life, as well as in the next, depends upon the purity and sanctity of your souls. Endeavour to preserve these most sacred: Keep a guard upon your inmost thoughts, and suffer nothing to enter, or at least to dwell there, which may contaminate their whiteness; or cause that conscience to reproach you, whose minutest admonitions are most sacredly to be

regarded ; for they are faithful, and if duly heeded, will undoubtedly preserve you from evil. And in the last place, let me observe, that if in all your reading, as well as in all your actions, you make it your constant custom, before you enter upon them, sincerely to intreat God's blessing, and to request that He would prosper what you undertake to its proper and desired purpose ; then will you never open a book, immoral or irreligious ; then will you never deliberately do any thing impure and defiling ; but, guided by this single rule, will persevere unblameable unto the end, seeking constantly the glory of God, and in that search finding the eternal salvation of your own souls. Which, &c.

ANECDOTES on the pernicious tendency and effect of Bad Books.

(1.) “ Words, says Mr. Addison, are the transcript of those ideas, which are in the mind of man : Writing and printing are the transcript of words. As the Supreme Being has expressed, and, as it were, printed His ideas in the Creation, Men express their ideas in Books ; which, by this great invention of

latter ages, may last as long as the sun and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. Books are the legacies which a great genius leaves to mankind, and which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn. Now, if writings are thus durable (continues he) and may pass from age to age throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an author be of committing any thing to print, that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error? Writers of great talents, who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour, are to be looked upon as the pest of society, and the enemies of mankind. They leave Books behind them (as it is said of those who die in distempers which breed an ill-will towards their own species) to scatter infection, and destroy their posterity. They act the counterparts of a Confucius, or a Socrates; and seem as it were sent into the world to deprave human nature, and sink it into the condition of brutality." See Spectator, No. 166.

(2.) Dr. Young (whose moral and poetic pen has been so well employed in the cause of truth and virtue) speaks with a noble resentment of this prostitution of genius.

The flowers of Eloquence, profusely pour'd
O'er spotted Vice, fill half the letter'd world;
As if to magic numbers' powerful charm
'Twas given to make a *civet* of their song
Obscene, and sweeten ordure to perfume.
Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute,
And lifts our swine-enjoyments from the mire:
Can powers of genius exercise their page,
And consecrate enormities with song?

Art, curst art! wipes off th' indebted blush
From Nature's cheek, and bronzes every shame,
Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt,
And Infamy stands candidate for praise.

Night Thoughts, 5.

(3.) The last mentioned sentiment of this fine writer is strikingly confirmed by the following story of an atheistical author. This man, at a time when he lay dangerously sick, and had desired the assistance of a neighbour-

ing Curate, confessed to him with great contrition, that nothing sat more heavy at his heart, than the sense of his having seduced the age by his writings, and that their evil influence was likely to continue even after his death. The Curate, upon further examination, finding the penitent in the utmost agonies of despair, and being himself a man of learning, told him, that he hoped his case was not so desperate as he apprehended, since he found that he was so very sensible of his fault, and so sincerely repented of it. The penitent still urged the evil tendency of his book to subvert all religion, and the little ground of hope there could be for one, whose writings would continue to do mischief, when his body was laid in ashes. The Curate finding no other way to comfort him, told him, “ that he did well in being afflicted for the evil Design, with which he published his book, but that he ought to be very thankful that there was no danger of its doing any hurt : That his cause was so very bad, and his arguments so weak, that he did not apprehend any ill Effects from it : In short, that he might rest satisfied, his performance could do no

more mischief after his death, than it had done whilst he was living. To which, he added for his farther satisfaction, that he did not believe any, besides the author's particular friends and acquaintance, had ever been at the pains of reading it, or that any body, after his death, would ever inquire after it."

But (see the vanity and inconsistency of the human mind!) the dying man had still so much the pride and frailty of an author in him, as to be cut to the heart with these consolations; and without answering the good man his confident, asked those about him (with a peevishness too natural to a sick person) "where they had met with one so ignorant, and whether they thought Him a proper person to attend one in his condition!"

The Curate finding that the author did not expect to be dealt with as a real and sincere penitent, but as a penitent of Importance, after a short admonition withdrew; not questioning, but he should be again sent for, if the sickness grew desperate. The unhappy author, however, recovered for that time, and afterwards lived to write two or three other tracts, with the same spirit, and, very luckily

for mankind, and his own reputation, with the same acceptance and success.

(4.) It deserves our serious remark, that as the atheistical writer Lucretius himself, is reported by two ancient authors to have run mad, and to have killed himself; so likewise two ingenious gentlemen of our own nation, (Mr. Creech and Mr. Blount) who did no great service to their generation by turning his works into English prose and verse, found something fit so heavily upon their minds, though they were in no mean outward circumstances, that both of them followed their admired author in his dismal exit; putting an end to their lives with their own hands. The one hanged, and the other pistol'd himself.

(5.) What a blessing to mankind, in himself and in his writings, was the ingenious, humble and pious Mr. Boyle! what a common pest to society was the fallacious, proud and impious Hobbes! Accordingly we find the former bad adieu to this world with the utmost serenity, honour, and hope; while the

other went out of it in the dark, with an odium on his name, as well as with terrible apprehensions of an unknown future. He had been an instrument of the prince of darkness, in poisoning many young gentlemen and others with his wicked principles, as the late Earl of Rochester (heretofore mentioned) confessed with extreme grief in the hours of affliction. It is remarked by those who critically observed the author of "The Leviathan," that though in a humour of bravado, he would speak very strange and unbecoming things of God, yet, in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before him. What could make this strange man awake in such terror and amazement, if his candle happened to go out in the night; but that he was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dissolute and gloomy mind; and because he neither knew how quite to extinguish, nor yet how to bear the light of conscience, that "candle of the Lord," within him? Many, alas! appear like Atheists in their mirth, in wine and company, who are quite of other sentiments in sickness, and the gloom of solitude.

(6.) Amongst the many reasons why God, besides a Private and personal Judgment to every man at death, has reserved and ordained men to another Public and general Trial ;— a trial universal, manifest before all, and performed in full view of the world, of men and of angels ;—amongst these, some have very rationally and awfully suggested the following, namely, “ That the good and evil effects of what men have done here below, by their examples, their instructions, their books, and the like, may also come into the account : Which cannot so conveniently be reckoned or rewarded whilst this world continues ; because those effects (of which they laid the foundations in their lifetime) may be perpetually increasing, so long as there are successions of men capable of profit or of prejudice by them.” Hence it is inferred, that even after death the effects of men’s good or bad actions may add to their punishment, or increase their reward, according to the good or evil examples they have given ; the useful or pernicious volumes, whether in prose or verse, which they have written ; the foundations they have established to promote virtue or discourage vice ; or

the customs they have introduced to countenance profligacy and dissolution of manners. Thus some are of opinion that Saint Paul, for instance, may be daily receiving addition to his glory and happiness, in proportion to the benefits derived to all ages, by his writings and holy life; while dissolute Poets, profane writers, and the other propagators of vice, have their reckoning inflamed and aggravated by all the debauchery, occasioned or held in countenance by those loose compositions they have left behind them. Surely, if there is any consideration capable to awaken reflection and touch the heart, this of all others merits the most serious attention! Who would coolly wish to hurt the souls of others? But who (still more dreadful) would deliberately, and for ever, study to destroy his own!

(7.) The oldest library of which we have any account, was that established amongst the Egyptians, by their King Osymandias; and upon the front of which was the following memorable inscription, ΨΤΧΗΣ Ι'ΑΤΡΕΙΟΝ, "Medicine for the mind." See Diod. Sic. Lib. i.

(8.) The following is a piece of advice communicated by the late Dr. Doddridge, in a letter to a young man, formerly his pupil; (who was then entering into a merchant's counting-house) on the subject of unprofitable reading in his sphere: "Let it, says he, be your constant care, that study may not interfere with devotion, nor engross that valuable time, which should be consecrated to the service of your God. If we are abandoned by Him, our genius must flag, and all our thoughts become languid and confused. It will be in vain that we seek the assistance of Books; for when HE ceaseth to act by them, the most sprightly writers will appear dull, the most perspicuous, obscure, and the most judicious, trifling: Whereas, if we maintain a continued regard to Him in the constant exercises of lively devotion, we shall enjoy his assistance and blessing in our studies, and then the profiting will quickly appear to ourselves and others. And, (which is still more desirable) when thus we are conversing with God, we are preparing for that world of light, where our capacities will be gloriously improved; where we shall be sur-

rounded with the wisest and best of company, and new scenes of knowledge will be daily opening to our minds *. Let us be constant and jealous in the service of God, and " we shall be excellent scholars ten thousand years hence;" while those who have made the greatest improvements in human knowledge, yet have lived in neglect of God and religion, are forgotten upon earth, and consigned over to the gloom of everlasting darkness. Let us remember, that every hour which we take from God to give to our books, we forfeit some degree of future happiness, which might have been the reward of that hour, had we spent it aright. And, when we consider, that knowledge is a part of the happiness of heaven, we shall certainly find, that, upon the whole, we lose a great deal more knowledge than we get, by such sacrilegious encroachments; even though our studies should succeed more prosperously than we have reason to expect they will." See his life, by Orton, p. 110.

* " The more our spirits are enlarg'd on earth,
The deeper draught shall they receive of heav'n."

YOUNG.

(9.) The same excellent man, amongst other exemplary rules for the direction of his conduct while a student, has the following : “ Never let me trifle with a book, with which I have no present concern. In applying myself to any book, let me first recollect what I may learn by it, and then beg suitable assistance from God : Thus let me endeavour to make all my studies subservient to practical religion and ministerial usefulness.” How happy would it have proved for many a reader to have carried a rule like this constantly in his thoughts, as a proper embargo to the perusal of those many volumes, which, so far from improving, are evidently calculated only to fascinate and poison the unguarded mind !

(10.) How remarkably careful the ancients were of what books they let their children read, may be seen in that amiable writer, Mr. Rollin, vol. 3. p. 77. of his Ancient history. 12^o. Edition. Valerius Maximus, in particular, informs us, that the Lacedemonians commanded the books of the Poet Archilo-

thus to be removed from their city, as judging the reading of them highly improper for their youth, and subversive of decency and good manners. Thus that wise nation held in little esteem the elegance and wit of his writings; which, however they might refine the imagination, were but too likely to hurt the mind, and contaminate the principles of their children.

(II.) On his death-bed, the penitent Earl of Rochester was touched with very strong compunction for the various indecencies he had diffused from his pen; accordingly, we have seen in the foregoing discourse, how extremely solicitous he was, if it were possible, to suppress and stifle them, as suited only to serve the cause of vice and profaneness*. He ingenuously declared, “ that that absurd and foolish Philosophy which the world had so much admired, as propagated by the late Mr. Hobbes and others, had undone him, and many more, of the best parts in the nation :” While his sense of the past, and his

* See p. 258.

hearty concern for the pious education of his children, made him wish, “ That his son might never be a wit; that is (as he himself explained it) one of those wretched creatures; who pride themselves in abusing God and religion, denying his being, or his providence; but rather that he might become an honest, and a religious man, which alone could render him the support and blessing of his family.”

(12.) Above all he was remarkably hearty in his endeavours to be serviceable to those about him. On which head, we cannot pass by that most fervent and passionate exclamation of his to a gentleman of some character, who came to visit him in his last illness. “ O remember, said he, that you condemn God no more! He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins! will, in mercy, I hope, touch your conscience sooner or later, as he has done mine! You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while! therefore I am the more free with you. We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions: Our persuasions have been false

and groundless; therefore God grant you repentance." And, seeing the same gentleman next day again, he said to him, "Perhaps you were disobliged by my plainness to you yesterday: I spake the words of truth and soberness to you;" and (striking his hand upon his breast with great emotion) said, "I hope God will touch your heart."

(13.) There are perhaps few instances in all history that can parallel these keen convictions of an awakened mind. Dr. Young, in the celebrated work above quoted, observes,

"A death-bed's a detector of the heart;
Truth is deposited with man's last hour,
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust:
Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*."

We need go no further than the striking case before us. Here were parts so exalted by nature, and improved by study, and yet so corrupted and debased by irreligion and vice, that he who was made to be one of the glories of his age, became a Proverb; and, if his repentance had not happily interposed, would have been one of the greatest Reproaches of it. He well knew the small

strength of that weak cause, whose arguments had so poisoned his mind : And as at first he despised, so afterwards he abhorred them : He felt the mischiefs, and saw the madness of their plan ; and hence, though he lived indeed to the scandal of many, he died as much to the edification of all those who saw him ; and because they were but a small number, he desired that, through the mouths and pens of his reverend friends, Dr. Burnett and Mr. Parson, even when dead he might still speak good instruction to all. Thus, though he lived in heart, in writing, and in life a heinous sinner, he died with every hopeful symptom of a sincere and most exemplary penitence.

Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die* !



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

at
d
e
n
e
e
t
a
o
t
o